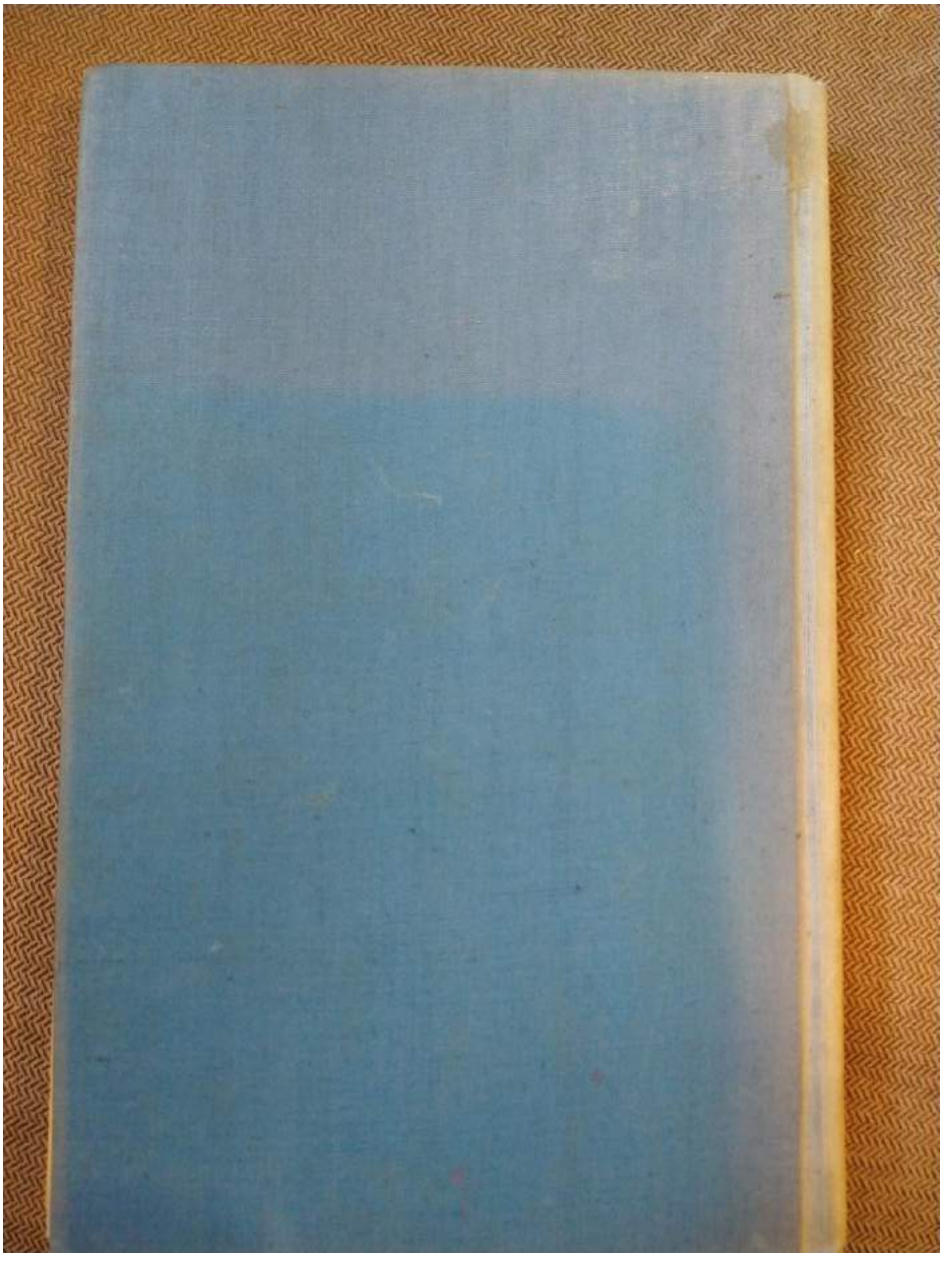
MYSTICISM IN THE RGVEDA • T. G. MAINKAR • POPULAR



MYSTICISM IN THE ṚGVEDA

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To

My Teacher

Professor Dr. R. N. DANDEKAR

with profound gratefulness.

PREFACE

I very gratefully acknowledge the debt I owe to scholars like CAROLINE SPURGEON, E. HERMAN, PRINGLE-PATTISON, PRATT and others. I have followed the translation of the Ṛgveda by GRIFFITH.

I do not know how to express my gratitude to Dr. R. N. Dandekar my 'Guru' who initiated me into Vedic Studies. I am deeply indebted to *Guruvarya* Professor H. D. Velankar for making very valuable suggestions. I have also to thank my friend Prof. P. G. Kulkarni of the Philosophy Department for his suggestions. My friend Dr. C. R. Deshpande has spared no pains while correcting the proofs and my best thanks are due to him.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTORY

THE LATE DR. DASAGUPTA when he delivered his six lectures in the Norman Wait Harris Foundation Lectures, in 1926 in Northwestern University at Evanston, III, spoke on '*Hindu Mysticism*'. The scope of the lectures of the late learned Doctor was very wide indeed, for he tried to cover a very vast ground as is indicated by the very titles of his different lectures. He spoke on Sacrificial Mysticism, Mysticism of the Upaniṣads, Yoga Mysticism, Buddhistic Mysticism, Classical forms of Devotional Mysticism and Popular Devotional Mysticism. The table of contents, even at a cursory glance reveals as to how critically and closely he tried to survey the entire field of Hindu Mysticism, bringing out its different aspects. In his preface (p. xi) he observes "Perhaps I should have entitled the present volume, 'The Development of Indian Mysticism''. This is precisely what he has tried to study. He begins with the period of the Ṛgveda and the Atharvaveda, then studies the Sacrificial mysticism of the age of the Brāhmaṇas, then goes through the Upaniṣads, the Purāṇas and finally comes to the days of Modern Mysticism, the days of modern mystics like Kabīr, Mīrā and Tulsī. He has not left out the Yoga Mysticism and has also studied the Buddhistic Mysticism.

The purpose and aim of the present study are rather very modest and moderate that way. This is an attempt to deal with the Ṛgvedic Mysticism, Ancient Indian or Aryan Mysticism. I am thus restricting myself to the period of the Ṛgveda Saṁhitā. Avoiding the usual temptation of treating the two Vedas, the Ṛgveda and the Atharvaveda together, I have left out the Atharvaveda for some good reasons. Every student of the Vedas readily grants that there is always some propriety in studying these two Vedas together; that they are complementary and reflect the same age; that belonging as they do, to the higher and the lower strata of the same society, they make the picture of the then society complete and that the Vedic mind stands fully reflected in them. All this is, no

doubt true and yet there are good reasons why for a critical study of the present problem, the two Vedas deserve to be dealt with separately as each in itself is an epoch and also reflects a distinct phase of the Vedic mind. In any case the Ṛgveda which offers rich material for a study of Mysticism does deserve to be treated by itself.

Could there be any mystics in the Ṛgvedic times? The Ṛgveda has been thoroughly studied by scholars of great repute for over many generations. Problems of interpretation, History, Civilization, Text, all these have received due attention. But after all, all these different aspects imply only one outlook and that is Historical Outlook. These hymns do deserve a purely literary and philosophical approach, which is equally important as the Historical Approach, if not more. But Vedic criticism, so far as one sees, could never get beyond the question whether the Ṛgveda is 'priestly poetry' or 'lyrical poetry' as the diverging opinions of OLDENBERG and BRUNHOFFER would indicate. If the Ṛgvedic composers are regarded primarily as poets, then it is quite likely that mysticism could be discovered in them.

This view would necessarily beg the question of the definition of mysticism. The term has been 'so irresponsibly applied:' that such a discussion about the nature of mysticism becomes a sheer necessity in such studies. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1934), after defining a mystic as 'one who seeks by contemplation and self-surrender to obtain union with or absorption into the Deity, or who believes in spiritual apprehension of truths, beyond the understanding,' adds, 'whence mysticism (n.) (often contempt)'. The word is by common consent used to indicate 'any kind of occulticism or spiritualism, or any specially curious or fantastic views about God and the Universe. Two facts can be pointed out in connection with mysticism, that very great men that the world has known, Plato, Plotinus, Eckhart, Spinoza, Goethe, Hegel, Gauḍapāda, S'aṁkara, Kabīra and Mīrā were mystics and secondly that all these, without exception, were happy in their, or on account of their mysticism. Mysticism is always the very centre of the being of the mystics from which fount they draw their happiness. Thirdly, 'mysticism is a temper rather

than a doctrine, an atmosphere than a system of philosophy'. The mystics catch the glimpses of the face of Truth at different angles and consequently bring forth fresh aspects of Truth with the result that there is no unanimity in their version and often they contradict. Wordsworth gets his revelation of divinity through Nature which to Blake is a 'hindrance'. And yet all these have perceived that 'Unity underlies Diversity'. This perception is the basic fact of all mysticism, it is at once its starting point and goal, and can be described as 'an attitude of mind founded upon an intuitive or experienced conviction of unity, of oneness, of alikeness in all things'

Sarvabhūtasthamātmānam sarvabhūtāni cātmani।
Ikṣate yogayuktātmā sarvatra samadarśanaḥ॥ BG. VI. 29

It is therefore that the Ṛgvedic poet who observes '*ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti*' I. 164. 46. is a mystic, as well as the author of the BG. who remarks *Śuni caiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ* (*BG. V. 18*). From this mystic perception of the fundamental unity arises the peculiar belief that all things are but forms or manifestations of One (*tejoṁśasaṁbhavam* BG. X. 41.); naturally the corrollary that the manifestations are changing while the One endures (Sat) and is immortal (Amṛta). Thus the Ideal becomes the only Real (*Vinaśyatsu aviṇaśyat* BG. XIII. 27).

Bhāvairasadbhirevāyamadvayena ca kalpitaḥ।
Bhāvā apyadvayenaiva tasmādadvayatā śivā॥ GK. II. 33

The feeling of universal Unity gives rise to the belief of divinity of Man, his being a spark of the Divine, as the Bṛh. Up. puts it '*Agneḥ visphuliṅgāḥ* (cf. the Kaṭha II. V, 8, 9) and also of the possibility of knowing the Divine through the soul or the spirit, the godlike part of his nature for 'only the like can know the like'. Intellect understands material things while the spirit understands the spiritual things for as the Kaṭha explains '*parāñci khāni vyatṛṇat svayaṁbhūḥ.*' II. 4. 1. and as Gauḍapāda puts it '*Brahma jñeyam ajam nityam ajena ajam vibudhyate।*' *III. 33.* The methods and the processes of mental and spiritual knowledge are different in that in mental apprehension things

are perceived from without and comparison, analysis and definition lead us to further knowledge, but in spiritual apprehension, the understanding is an internal process and through the identification of the knower and the known. Porphyry's words are relevant here for he observes 'like is known only by like' and the condition of all knowledge is that the subject should become like the object as Gauḍapāda says '*jñānam jñeyābhinnam.*' III. 33. Thus the mystic always has a ceaseless aspiration to 'become like god'. As a logical conclusion of such a position arises the belief that the soul is immortal and as observed by Plato 'All knowledge is recollection'. Bodies disintegrate but the soul continues, and in exceptional cases may have a memory of the previous experiences.

The mystic is different from a theologian for these views to him are not a letter of law or dogma to be believed in, but are a matter of direct experience and for this very reason he is entirely different from a logician who argues, or the rationalist thinker whose weapon is reason or from the man of science who relies only on demonstrated facts. The mystic feels what he knows, he has an intuitive inner knowledge.

This leads us to another peculiar fact about the mystic that in a sense he is alone and in a sense not. In as much as his conviction is the result of what he has felt and seen, it tends to be and remains unique and none other can possibly share with him his peculiar vision. In this sense he is alone, so different from the common run of humanity who on account of this fundamental uniqueness are likely to find incoherence in him. But then there is the other point that the mystics of the world, of different times and climes speak in an amazingly similar manner and in this sense the mystic is not alone. Not only that. But the mystics have always held a sway over vast multitudes of minds and this could be accounted for only by the assumption of the presence of 'mystical germ' in the rest of humanity who are therefore in a position to respond to their message.

The mystic perceives 'Harmony' and experiences 'Joy' on account of the fact that he has in him 'the transcendental feeling, imagination, mystic reason, cosmic consciousness,

divine sagacity, ecstasy or vision.' 'Symbolism and Mythology are the language of the Mystic'. In as much as he sees Unity everywhere, to him all things in Nature seem to have something in which they are really alike. Thus emerges the symbol which has something of the thing it symbolises. 'It is thus that the falling leaves become a symbol of human mortality. On account of and through such symbolism ordinary things apprehended by finite intelligence appear as 'the husk of a deeper truth'. The laws of the world around us and those of the spiritual world are analogical. It is, therefore, that 'the yearly harvest, the sower and his seed, the leaven in the loaf, the grain of mustard-seed, the lilies of the field, the action of fire, worms, moth, rust, bread, winewater, the mystery of the wind, unseen yet felt, all instances of Christian Nature Symbolism contain and exemplify great and abiding truths.' It is also precisely for this reason that the Aśvattha tree, the Nyagrodha tree, the Lavaṇa dissolved in water in the Upaniṣads or the Analogy of the Ocean in Cullavagga IX become significant to us, seem to convey something more than what they actually express. To the mystic nothing in the world is trivial, unimportant, common or unclean. As Blake puts it in his memorable lines :

To see a world in a grain of sand
And a Heaven in a wild flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.

True mystics feel the Unity in Diversity, feel the immortal nature of the soul as well as its divinity; this is the experience and life.

Now after a study of the nature of mysticism and the mystics we could return to the question we asked ourselves: Could there be any mystics in the Ṛgvedic times? The Ṛgvedic times have been commonly regarded as the early dawn of culture, times which witnessed a sort of primitive religion. From the foregoing discussion it would appear that mysticism being an attitude it can exist even in that sort of primitive religion. It is clear that the mystics are 'a special tribe of seers'. The word used here 'Seers' brings us face to face with the Ṛgvedic poets for they are all 'Seers'. These poets are

called 'Ṛṣis' and the word 'Ṛṣi' is explained as '*Ṛṣiḥ Darśanāt*'—'he is a seer because he has a vision'. The songs of the Ṛgveda are not composed but are revealed to the Vedic poets. Here is everything seen and felt, not artificially worked up and composed in the ordinary sense of the word. This would appear to present us a difficulty for it may be urged that the Ṛgvedic poets themselves speak of the composition of their prayers in terms of cutting the grass or fashioning the chariot or at least, composed in imitation of the earlier poets. How are we to explain the simultaneous existence of the two very opposite qualities in a Ṛgvedic song; seen or revealed and fashioned or composed? A little consideration would show that this is not a very serious difficulty and can be got over by the supposition that the thought is seen, spontaneously felt, while it is the verbal expression that might have involved a conscious effort, as it always does in Literature. Yāska, the author of the Nirukta tells us that '*Sākṣātkṛtadharmāṇaḥ ṛṣayaḥ iti āhuḥ*'. The same fact is again emphasised in the other familiar word '*Śruti*' so often used of the Vedic songs. No better rendering of the word, conveying fully the idea behind it, could be attempted than that by DR. RADHAKRISHNAN, 'Rhythms of the Infinite heard by the soul'. Here is man's mind hearing the Infinite speak to it. Attention may be drawn again to the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa VI I. I. where the word 'ṛṣi' is used with reference to the Prāṇas and is explained as:

'*Ke te ṛṣayaḥ iti prāṇāḥ vā ṛṣayaḥ yat purasmāt sarvasmāt idam icchantaḥ s'rameṇa tapasā ariṣan tasmāt ṛṣayaḥ*'.

The root here is 'Riṣ' to know from which the word 'ṛṣi' is derived. Prāṇas here are the energy of the universe and for them 'to know is to create'. According to NALINIMOHAN SASTRI (pp. 11–12) the three roots 'Riṣ (or more properly Ṛṣ), Dṛś, and Smṛ were cognate and were derived from a common root 'Ṛ' to know and indicated different phases of knowledge—Ṛṣ denoting that form of knowledge which was equivalent to creation, the consciousness of the final cause, while both Dṛś and Smṛ indicated a knowledge of the past—the former denoting a recovery by genius or intuition of a truth that lay hidden—and the latter denoting the recollection of a past experience. Possibly the particle 'sma' gives a sense of

past because of its connection with Smṛ. It is also to be noted that roots with the sense 'know' also denote motion and thus suggest activity to consciousness. This is how the Ṛgvedic mind worked, and it tried to find out Truth.

To a critical reader the Ṛgvedic songs clearly indicate that long before the Saṁhitīkaraṇa of the floating poetry, the Ṛgvedic mind had left its primitive simplicity and had begun to develop some highly interesting philosophical notions. In this atmosphere it is but narural that we should have many noteworthy mystics. Profound thoughts and high aspirations very naturally take a poetic garb and thus the poets often become mystics or the truth may be stated as generally the mystics are poets. They are not philosophers interested in giving moral lessons directly but are poets trying to touch our 'transcendental feeling'. This the Ṛgvedic poets certainly do.

Could the Ṛgvedic poets be regarded as metaphysical rather than mystical? If we understand the metaphysician as one interested in knowing the beginnings or causes of things and the mystic as one feeling the very knowledge of the ultimate end of things, 'that all nature is leading up to union with One', then it may be urged that the author of the Nāsadīya Sūkta, or the Hiraṇyagarbha Sūkta or the Puruṣa Sūkta, is asking questions about the 'first cause' and so be regarded as mataphysical rather than as mystical. But it will be seen that in these songs there is more of intuition rather than of logic and reason. It is perception by the mind that we get here rather than argued theory. Hence it would be more appropriate to regard these Ṛgvedic poets as mystics, though it could be readily conceded that some are metaphysical. Even the Songs XIX. 53, 54 in the Atharvaveda with their theme 'Time' reveal the glimpse of the Time that the poet had rather than a metaphysical inquiry. The Vedic poets have no authority before them which binds them though they themselves no doubt bound the later thinkers by becoming authority for them. Vasiṣṭha and Dīrghatamas Māmateya are the two great mystics of the age with which we are concerned here. Their influence on the later Indian philosophical thought has been immense. Vasiṣṭha's name has been included in the list of teachers—Guruparaṁparā–of the Śāṁkara School of

Advaita Vedānta. Another mystic of the Ṛgvedic times is Vāmadeva whose instance is referred to by Bādarāyaṇa, the author of the Vedānta Sūtras I. I. 30.

We might touch here another interesting topic. Can we speak of mysticism, Eastern and Western ? The foregoing discussion should have made it clear that we cannot have such a clear distinction or varieties of Mysticism. RUDOLF OTTO in his '*Mysticism, East and West*' has some relevant observations: 'Though Rudyard Kipling wrote that East is East and West is West, it is untrue so far as Mysticism is concerned.' Indeed, it is maintained in respectable quarters that a Westerner cannot penetrate the inmost nature of Indian Mystic thought and that an Oriental cannot experience in its depth and reality the motives of the Western speculative philosophy of Aristotle and Kant. As against this view it is asserted that mysticism is just the same in all places and in all ages. OTTO proceeds to point out that 'in mysticism there are strong primal impulses working in the human soul which, as such, are completely unaffected by differences of climate, of geographical position or of race. Secondly mysticism is not just mysticism but there are within it many varieties of expression which are as great as those in religion, ethics or art and thirdly these variations are not determined by race or geographical position but they arise and appear in sharp contrast to one another within the same circle of race and culture' (pp. xvi–xvii). It should be clear from these observations of one who has carried out a detailed comparison between the great Indian mystic Śaṁkarācārya and Meister Eckhart, the great German mystic that in such comparative studies we do expect to find startling similarities as well as interesting variations. CAROLINE SPURGEON has pointed out (pp. 21 ff) the difference between the Eastern and the Western mysticism in the following words. 'The Western mysticism is, to be brief, Eastern mysticism fused with Christianity. The Western mystic recognises the deep symbolism and sacredness of all that is human and natural, of human love, of human intellect, and of the natural world, things which to the Eastern mystic appear as obstruction and a veil. The Western mystic regards these things as the means of

spiritual ascent, which the Eastern mystic tries to renounce'. In this context we have to remember the mysticism of Kabīr and others, which in the light of these remarks would appear to have a Western flavour. The goals of the two mystics have been summed up as : 'I am Brahman' and 'I see the Infinite in all things and so see God'. It is impossible to forget the Vibhūtiyoga in the Bhagavadgītā in this context. We remember that there was a time when the Indian Bhakti Cult was supposed to have arisen due to Christian influence. The view does not deserve any special refutation here for DR. BHANDARKAR, PROF. VELANKAR and others have already ably done it. The net result of all these discussions would be the admission on the part of a student of mysticism that the Bhakti mysticism is akin to the Western mysticism. It has been observed above that the Eastern mystic regards the universe as a veil and renunciation as a step towards realization. The inner life of a mystic always has certain steps, 'purification, contemplation, and ecstatic union which throb with life and devotional fervour'. This would be true if we take into consideration the Indian thought of the times of the Upaniṣads and of times subsequent to them. The Ṛgvedic times would not fit in this scheme of things ; for here is not to be seen the later disgust for things worldly. The Universe and Nature are no hindrance to spiritual progress. SPURGEON observes (p. 15 ff) 'The thought which has been described as mystical has its roots in the East, in the great Oriental religions. The mysterious 'secret' taught by the Upaniṣads is that the soul or spiritual consciousness is the only source of true knowledge. The Hindu calls the soul the 'seer' or the 'knower' and thinks of it as a great eye in the centre of his being, which, if he concentrates his attention upon it, is able to look outwards and to gaze upon Reality. The soul is capable of this because in essence it is one with Brahman, the universal soul. The apparent separation is an illusion wrought by matter. Hence, to the Hindu, matter is an obstruction and a deception, and the Eastern mystic despises and rejects and subdues all that is material, and bends all his faculties on realizing his spiritual consciousness and dwelling in that.' Western Mysticism, however, taking its cue from Plato and Plotinus regards the universe as Beauty, delights in material

beauty and as he regards it as the manifestation of the Highest, loves it and one might say, adores it. It is this aspect of the Western Mysticism that explains the outlook of the Western poets like Wordsworth and others towards Nature. The Eastern Vibhūtiyoga, Bhagavadgītā X, is the nearest approach to Western Mysticism. If this distinction between the Western and the Eastern Mysticism is properly grasped, then it will be easily seen that the Early Vedic Mystics are of the Western brand. They regard life with love and zest and adore Nature as the manifestation of divine powers. It would not be an exaggeration to say that to the Ṛgvedic mystics almost every phenomenon is kindly as well as vigorous. Human life becomes, to them, full of happiness and worth living by the help and blessings of these powers, but then these poets are not frank materialists. They see that Order, 'Ṛta', is the essence of everything. To them everything is sacred and nothing is to be shunned. Viewed from this point of view the Ṛgvedic poets and mystics offer a sharp contrast to the thinkers and mystics of the later periods. There cannot be any doubt about the fact that the later Indian philosophical thought is in a way a logical development of the Ṛgvedic thought, yet it is clear to every critical student that there is nothing in the Upaniṣads or in the later philosophical literature that corresponds to the great zest and enthusiasm for life which is a prominent characteristic of the Ṛgvedic poets. The Ṛgvedic poets without losing their interest in life reach and in a way foreshadow the great conclusions of the later thinkers.

It would be worth our while to note the views or judgements of Vedic scholars regarding Vedic mysticism. WINTERNITZ would call the hymns of the Atharvaveda as 'more mystery mongering than true philosophy' and he shows his disagreement with DEUSSEN who tries to find some deep sense in them. He observes 'DEUSSEN has taken endless trouble to discover sense and meaning in the philosophical hymns of the Atharvaveda and to establish certain coherent ideas in them.' (*AGPh.* I. I. pp. 209 ff) WINTERNITZ discusses some of these hymns XIX. 53, 54; XIII. 3; IX.11; XI.5. and in conclusion remarks 'I think one would be honouring this kind of verses too much by seeking deep wisdom in them....Just as the liar must sometimes

speak truth, in order that one may believe his lies, so the pseudo-philosopher, too, must introduce here and there into his fabrications a really philosophical idea which he has 'picked up' somewhere or other, in order that one may take his nonsense for the height of wisdom. This is merely verse-making which is neither philosophy nor poetry'. (pp. 150 ff *HIL.*) For the Ṛgvedic songs, however, he has kinder words for in these verses we find Pantheism, the idea of a universal Soul and other philosophical ideas for the first time. He has nothing to say about the mysticism of these poets.

DASAGUPTA observes: 'The word mysticism is a European word with a definite history. Most European writers have used it to denote an intuitive or ecstatic union with the deity, through contemplation, communion or other mental experiences, or to denote the relationship and potential union of the human soul with the ultimate reality. But I should for my present purposes like to give it a wider meaning which would include this and other different types of mysticism that I may be discussing in the course of this series of lectures. I should like to define mysticism as a theory, doctrine, or view that considers reason to be incapable of discovering or realizing the nature of ultimate truth, whatever be the nature of this ultimate truth, but at the same time believes in the certitude of some other means of arriving at it. If this definition be accepted then this ritualistic philosophy of the Vedas is the earliest form of mysticism that is known to India or to the world. This Vedic mysticism prepared the way for the rise of the other forms of mysticism that sprang up in India'. (p. 17). He notices the similarities of some forms of Indian mysticism with the Western types of mysticism and then restricts himself to a discussion of only a few and familiar Ṛgvedic Hymns, and dismisses the Atharvaveda in a summary manner saying 'I shall omit from my discussion the hymns from the Atharvaveda which deal only with spells, witchcraft and incantations'.

BLOOMFIELD has devoted two sections 59 and 60 (pp. 86–93) to the discussion of the Cosmogonic and Theosophic hymns and the Ritualistic hymns of the Atharvaveda. He comments 'But

it would be a mistake to suppose that theosophic speculation is foreign to the Atharvan and inorganic; or, that all the hymns of this sort are loosely attached to the main body of its compositions. On the contrary, there is evidence that theosophic ideas and formulae had to some extent worked their way into the very tissue of its composition....The attentive reader of the Atharvan will frequently encounter a transition from philosophy to sophistry; philosophical ideas gone to seed, half decomposed, mixed, coagulated, bandied about and transferred in the relentless desire to produce some magic effect, or to exalt some divinity or ritualistic object far beyond its proper sphere. In general this class of hymns in the Atharvaveda is not devoid of a certain kind of originality and independance which isolates them to a considerable degree from the theosophic mantras of the Ṛgveda and other Saṁhitās, as well as from the speculations of the Upaniṣads. It is not saying too much that the Atharvan hymns are characterised by an even greater degree of garishness, unsteadiness and gaucherie; of mock-profundity, and impotent reaching out after the inexpressible, than the corresponding hymns of the Ṛgveda. To this is to be added a growing mechanicalness in the handling of these ideas: the important theosophical attributes are taken out of pigeon-holes as it were, and applied to the particular subject in hand, not without syncretism and awkward muddling, (87-88)'. KEITH is of the view that the philosophical hymns of the Ṛgveda do not give any simple or consistent view of the universe. It is only MAX MÜLLER who speaks with warmth about these hymns. It would not be a mistake to assert that barring the exception of MAX MÜLLER, most of the scholars are not inclined to attach much value to this kind of material from both the Vedas. They condemn the Atharvaveda in a downright manner and in passing pay a left handed compliment to the Ṛgvedic poets, who are supposed to have supplied the models to their Atharvavedic brothers.

After a perusal of these judgements of the celebrated Western scholars one would feel that an attempt to find Mysticism of the higher type in the Ṛgveda is likely to be a wild goose chase. But these views are to a good deal, exaggerations. It is not too much to say that with the most sincere effort on

their part they are not in a position to grasp the peculiarities of the Indian Mind, its Thought and Expression. What DASA-GUPTA has observed about Western Scholars in his '*Some Aspects of Buddhist Philosophy*' (pp. 82–83) is essentially true. He has observed 'Sanskrit scholarship is under a deep debt of gratitude to the works of Western scholars. The many-sided activities of Sanskritic researches of the present day would have been well-nigh impossible if occidental scholars had not opened so many new avenues and continued persistently their labour of love to unravel the mysteries of Indian civilization and culture. By their researches in Vedic philology and literature, their editing of Pali canons, their connecting Tibetan and Chinese studies with Sanskrit, their archæological discoveries in India, Central Asia, Turphan, Indo-China, Java and Bali and by their scholarly works in many other spheres of Sanskritic studies, they have opened up almost a new world of civilization to the students of Ancient India. But in one sphere, namely, that of Indian Philosophy their works have not, however, been as remarkable, though in this field also they have been opening new sources of study for Buddhistic researches by their translations from Tibetan and Chinese. The reason for their backwardness in Indian Philosophy is primarily threefold, firstly, the Sanskrit of the philosophical texts and commentaries is often too difficult for them; secondly, most of the European Orientalists lack proper sympathy for Indian philosophical and religious thought; and thirdly, there are probably no European Orientalists who are also bonafide students of philosophy. As a rule, the European Orientalist is seldom able to understand a difficult piece of philosophical Sanskrit and when he tries to understand it, he can proceed only philologically and most often misses the true philosophical import. This is enhanced by the fact that he starts with a preconceived notion, implicit or explicit, that the Indian philosophical or religious literature does not contain any such original or deep thoughts as might stimulate our present day philosophical inquiries. His interest in Indian matters is almost wholly antiquarian and he is always satisfied with curious and antique aspects of Indian culture in his investigations. He seldom has proper respect for the thinkers

whose thoughts he is trying to decipher and consequently great thoughts pass before his eyes while he is running after shadows'. In these memorable lines the European Scholarship has been given its proper mead of praise, its achievements being duly recognised and appreciated but at the same time its defects also having been correctly pointed out, its limitations having been made clear. No better appreciation and critique of Western Scholarship could be attempted. If an additional illustration were wanted, attention could be drawn to the criticism and appreciation of the Sanskrit Prose Romances by the Western Scholars. It certainly has not been possible for them to enter into the very spirit of the luxury and extravagance of these Prose Romances and to understand their slow yet majestic movement as well as the overlaid structure. Bāṇabhaṭṭa's Prose which imitates in literature the architecture of the Kailāsa Temple at Ellora has appeared to them as 'Indian Wood'. Further it is to be remembered that language is a mere clothing of the thought it seeks to express and also that nowhere as in the field of philosophy is experienced the inadequacy of a language to convey what is felt. I would have to add another reason. To put it in the words of PRINGLE PATTISON 'The eighteenth century is specially known as the age of Enlightenment, and its characteristic occupation was a crusade against the superstitions and abuses of the past. No doubt there was much work needing to be done in that direction, and good work was done. But in the religious as in other spheres, the eighteenth-century theory of human nature and progress was vitiated by the profoundly unhistorical spirit of the age. The view taken of the past was purely negative, a dark night of superstition and oppression, while the writers conceived themselves as standing in the clear light of day.... In this spirit all the religions of the past, including Christianity, were to the men of Enlightenment simply superstitions to be swept away.' Possibly many found it difficult to free themselves from these shadows of the age, which must have been dense as well as long. In this context one may do well to remember remarks of the same author. 'Certainly, when we investigate primitive rites and customs, it is often difficult to understand the

mentality which could originate ideas and practices so strange. Crude and even ridiculous as man's earliest religious ideas may appear, they represent at least the first stirrings of emotions perhaps the most characteristic of man as man–emotions which, with advancing knowledge and deeper moral experience, find for themselves gradually a more adequate object and a more reasonable expression. No sentiment is more spontaneous in its origin than the religious sentiment, more persistent throughout human history, and more far-reaching in its influence. How is it possible, then to treat it in all its varied modes of expression as an unaccountable aberration of the human mind, or as imposed upon the unthinking multitude by a band of unscrupulous conspirators for their own selfish ends?' (p. 5-6). And this is exactly what the ancient priests, the Brāhmaṇas, are supposed to have done! In the light of these remarks it would be possible for one to understand the views of OLDENBERG, HILLEBRANDT, BLOOMFIELD and others who might be regarded as under the influences of the 'prejudices of the Enlightenment.' Mysticism is 'passion for intimacy with Reality' and is a spirit and not a system and certainly not a method. It is according to MOACK 'formless speculation'; COVENTRY PATMORE 'most concrete and definite kind of spiritual apprehension of which man is capable'; GOETHE 'scholastic of the heart, the dialectic of the feelings'; CARDINAL WISEMAN 'Science of love'; HARNACK 'rationalism applied to the sphere above reason'. Thus Mysticism would ultimately appear to be the experience of the miraculous, or at least of supernatural phenomenon. It eludes definition for it is 'a movement of the soul which unites in itself the timeless and the progressive, the static and the dynamic, passivity and activity, absorption and independence, surrender and acquisition, thus holding within itself the most baffling oppositions, the most obstinate antinomies'. Mysticism is not all of one type. Love, Beauty, Wisdom and Devotion are the well-trodden paths to the Reality and PLOTINUS tells us that "there are different roads by which this may be reached; the love of beauty which exalts the poet; that devotion to the One and that ascent of science which make the ambition of the philosopher; and that love and

those prayers by which some devout and ardent soul tends in its moral purity towards perfection. These are the great highways conducting to that height above the actual and the particular, where we stand in the immediate presence of the Infinite who shines out as from the deeps of the soul" — in the presence of the Gandharva of the Ṛgvedic poet Vena Bhārgava (X. 123.). It is true that so far as the mystics are concerned, there could be a perfect blending of the various forms, yet it is also equally true that the division that PLOTINUS has suggested is very convenient for a study of Mysticism. Hence it is that Ṛgvedic Mysticism is here being discussed in different sections as Ritualistic Mystics, Philosophical Mystics, Nature Mystics and Love and Beauty Mystics.

CHAPTER TWO

RITUALISTIC MYSTICS

WHATEVER MAY be the view that one is inclined to hold about the nature of the Ṛgvedic poetry, that it is in the main a product of the priestly circles or that in these early songs we have the lark of humanity singing at its dawn and thus agree with either OLDENBERG or with BRUNHOFFER, one has to admit the fact that the Ṛgvedic poets are familiar with a Ritual—a Ritual which is not at all simple but is in itself a complicated procedure and has all the germs of the future growth that is witnessed in the succeeding period of the Brāhmaṇas. To these poets of the primitive period, the Sacrifice is a very important institution and it will not be an exaggeration to say that most of the songs are nothing but invitations to the various deities to their sacrifices. No doubt that it would not be wise to affirm such a statement with a scientific rigour and precision, for it is too well-known a fact that some songs have no relation with the sacrifice and that Sāyaṇācārya is forced to observe many a times '*viniyogaḥ laiṅgikaḥ*' yet it would be, at the same time, equally unwise to deny the complete permeation of the Ṛgvedic thought in all its respects by this institution of Sacrifice. The very fact that we have an independent and orderly collection of Soma songs proves the wide prevalence and the popularity of the Soma cult; and we have to remember that these songs which have been preserved are but a part of something good deal lost. The Yajña, the Adhvara, was a means of communication between the Gods and the humanity of which the singer was but a part. The Yajña was a divine institution and had to be accepted as such without questions or doubts. The power of the Sacrifice to win over the friendship of the Gods was a fact experienced. How frequently do the Ṛgvedic poets entreat the Gods to accept their offerings, attend the Savanas and also to bypass the sacrifices of others! But an important fact about this Ṛgvedic Sacrifice has to be borne in mind, a fact which is often forgotten by those who try to study this very intricate problem, that the Ṛgveda is the earliest text that we possess and is in

point of time much removed from the Brāhmaṇas. It will not do if while arriving at a conclusion regarding the nature of the Ṛgvedic Sacrifice, one does keep constantly remembering the later texts, the Brāhmaṇas and also still later ritualistic literature. Such an attempt is bound to prove a failure or at least misleading on account of the obvious fault of what may be termed as the 'chronological fallacy'. And yet great authorities could not avoid being the victims of this very alluring fallacy. Thus M. HAUG writes: 'It took, no doubt, many centuries before the endless number of rites and ceremonies and their bewildering complications could form themselves into such a system of sacrificial rules as we find already exhibited in the Brāhmaṇas but even in the days of the Ṛgveda not only the whole of 'Kalpa' was settled, save some minor points, but even the symbolical and mystical meanings of the majority of rites'. (*ABI.* 1863. p. 7 ff). The Hymns presuppose a settled ritual. We find religious poetry precede the profane songs in the history of poetry. According to M. HAUG even the Aśvamedha Hymn (I. 162.) belongs to the very early period of Sacrifice. He is prepared to admit the simple character of the first sacrifices so far as the number of priests and the manner of recitation are concerned, when he says that in these first sacrifices the Hotṛ alone must have played the important part. He concludes 'there can be hardly any doubt that the oldest hymns that we possess are purely sacrificial and made only for sacrificial purposes, and those hymns which express more general ideas or philosophical thoughts are comparatively late (p. 39).

BLOOMFIELD observes 'Sacrifice with its ceremonial formalities is the epidermis of the Vedic Religion' (p. 188). 'Sacrifice is the dominant note of Vedic life' (p. 31). 'The Ṛgveda presupposes a tolerably elaborate and not uninteresting ritual' (p. 31. *The Religion of the Veda*). Yet one point noteworthy about BLOOMFIELD is that he has steered clear of the chronological fallacy for he remarks 'The Ṛgveda begins with a form of worship, neither as extensive nor as formal and rigid as the technical ritual of the Yajurveda and the Brāhmaṇas'. (p. 76) In his opinion, the Ṛgveda would lose much of its obscurity if we knew its ritual. MACDONELL, however, appears to agree

with HAUG when he remarks 'The ritual which the hymns of the Ṛgveda were intended to accompany and which is fully described in the other Vedic texts, is, though carried out by sacrificial priests, from beginning to end saturated with magical observances'. It is obvious that he thinks the Ṛgvedic sacrifice to be in the main magical, and this because he is under the influence of the later Brahmanical literature as would be clear from his remarks 'Our knowledge of the recurrent sacrifices is derived from the ritual literature, for there are only few and obscure traces of them in the hymns of the Ṛgveda, which is almost exclusively concerned with the Soma Sacrifice. It is, however, probable that they were performed at least in their main features during the earliest Vedic period'. GRISWOLD observes that the ritual of the Brāhmaṇas was clearly continuous with that of the Ṛgveda. KEITH also is of the view that one cannot form any idea of the Ṛgvedic ritual unless the help from the later literature is taken, for he observes: 'The imperfection of the record of the Ṛgveda renders it necessary in any account of the Vedic ritual, to deal with the ritual as it stands in the later Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas'. Even after a comparison of the Ṛgvedic and the Avestan material he comes to the conclusion that 'the question of the primitive sacrifice is clearly insoluble since among certain similarities, there are great differences of view' (p. 40). BERGAIGNE, OLDENBERG and HILLEBRANDT, all these authorities have laid greater emphasis on the ritualistic aspect of the Ṛgvedic Sacrifice. L. RENOU, after a consideration of all these different views comes to the following conclusion: 'Recited in course of literary conceptions, they are connected with a worship, by the environment in which they are placed, rather than by the technical application to which they give rise. It is from this point of view that one can say without any paradox that the Ṛgveda is external to the Vedic worship'. 'The ritual that we possess has been, if not conceived, at least written out at a posterior date'.

DR. DASAGUPTA while writing about the Vedic sacrifice observes: 'This idea of sacrifice is entirely different from anything found in other races. For with the Vedic people, the sacrifices were more powerful than the Gods. The gods

could be pleased or displeased; if the sacrifices were duly performed the prayers were bound to be fulfilled!' Accuracy was of utmost importance; accuracy of performance and in pronunciation. 'It is possible that when these hymns were originally composed, they were but simple prayers to the deified powers of nature, or that they were only associated with some simple rituals. But the evidence that is presented to us in the late Vedic and non-Vedic records containing descriptions of these sacrifices and discussions respecting their value, convinces us beyond doubt that it was the performance of these sacrifices, perfect in every detail in accordance with the dictates of the sacrificial manuals, the Brāhmaṇas, that was believed to be capable of producing everything that a man could desire' (p.7). He summarises the elements of the Sacrificial mysticism as 'First, a belief that the sacrifices when performed with perfect accuracy, possess a secret, mysterious power to bring about or produce as their effect whatever we may desire either in this life or in the hereafter. Second, the conception of an unalterable law involved in such invariable and unfailing occurrences of effects consequent upon the performances of these sacrifices. Third, an acceptance of the impersonal nature of the Vedic literature, as having existed by itself from beginningless time and as not created or composed by any person, human or divine. Fourth, the view that the Vedic literature embodies nothing but a system involving commands and prohibitions. Fifth, recognition of the supreme authority of the Veda as the only source of ultimate truths which are far beyond the powers of human reason. Sixth, the view that truth or reality, whether it be of the nature of commands or of facts (as was maintained by the later Vedic schools of thought, the Upaniṣads), could be found once for all in the words of the Vedas. Seventh, the belief that the Vedic system of duties demands unfailing obedience and submission. Two definite characteristics emerge from these: first, the transcendent, mysterious, and secret power of the sacrifice, replacing the natural forces personified as gods; second, the ultimate superiority of the Vedas as the source of all truths, and as the unchallengeable dictators of our duties, leading to our material well-being and happiness. The assumption of the mysterious omnipotence of sacrifices, performed by following the authoritative injunctions of the Vedas inde-

pendently of reason or logical and discursive thought, forms the chief trait of the mysticism of the Vedic type. There is nothing here of feeling or even of intellect, but a blind submission, not to a person but to an impersonal authority which holds within it an unalterable and inscrutable law, the secret of all powers which we may want to wield in our favour. (p. 17–18). This according to DASAGUPTA is the Vedic sacrificial mysticism and it passed through some stages to the Upaniṣadic mysticism. 'The next step in the development of the Vedic type of mysticism was the intellectualisation of the material sacrifices. Thus meditation by substitution became important, as the powers of the sacrifice were transferred to it. Man's inner life, thought and prāṇas are also taken as sacrifices. By a process of crude generalisation the word Brahman came to denote the Vedic verse, truth, sacrifices and knowledge. Probably the word, etymologically meaning 'great' signified vaguely and obscurely the mysterious power underlying these sacrifices and the substitution meditations. Both the ideas involved in the conception of Brahman as the highest power and the highest knowledge were derived from the notion of the sacrifices' (p. 22).

One is really puzzled by these observations of the learned Doctor with reference to the Vedic Sacrificial Mysticism. But this is as a matter of fact indicative of the views of the early Vedic Scholarship. All the remarks, correctly speaking, apply to the Pūrva-Mīmāṁsā System or to the Sacrifice of the days of the Brāhmaṇas. We have already seen how the Western scholars are expressing widely divergent views regarding the relations of the ritual of the Ṛgvedic times with that of the times of the Brāhmaṇas. From all this it is easy to see that DASAGUPTA has in a way ignored the Ṛgvedic Ritualistic Mysticism. To be able to appreciate and understand this mysticism we must concentrate only on the Ṛgveda and must not look beyond it. It is no doubt true that the Ṛgvedic sacrifice was a simple affair but even the word simple has to be understood in its own limitations. As MACDONELL and KEITH have pointed out, this ritual was of a fairly specialised type. The presence of the words 'Atirātra, Gṛhamedhīya, Diviṣṭi, Pitṛyajña, Pūrvahūti, Prayāja and

Anuyāja, Pravṛj, Brahma-sava, Satra, Samāna-bhārman, Savana, Sahasrasāva etc. according to DR. POTDAR (p. 123 ff.) represents the types of the Ṛgvedic Sacrifice. It would be correct to observe that the Ṛgveda represents almost an epoch in itself so far as the development of the institution of Sacrifice is concerned. The Ur-arish Sacrifice must have been similar to that of the Ancient Persians as described by Herodotus, consisting of simple offerings on a seat of grass but without the use of fire. This offering was done with the help of a Magian. The Ṛgveda has the traces of this simple sacrifice, yajña, in its references to the seat of 'Barhis' and offering of Soma. Thus we read at VI. 68. 11.

> '*Idam vām andhaḥ pariṣiktam asme āsadyāsmin barhiṣi mādayethām*' ।

Gradually Agni was enkindled before commencing the sacrifice and so Agni became the invoker. Hotā from 'hve', to call and their priest also Hotā from 'Hu', later. Herodotus speaks of prayers of the early Persians and the Ṛgveda is too full of such prayers, spontaneous as well as those by imitation. The Ṛgveda has hymns I. 162, 163, connected with the famous Aśvamedha Sacrifice and the Āpri Hymns have some connection with the animal sacrifices. Again the Ṛgveda has verses in due order for the Praugaśastra in I. 2–3 and II. 41 and refers to sacrificial technicalities like 'Sūktavāka, Subrahmaṇya, Yājyā, Vaṣaṭ, Sruvā, Idhma, Yūpa, Trikadruka, Paridhi, Puroḍāśa' etc. This is, I believe, evidence enough to prove that the Ṛgveda is almost an historical record of the development of the institution of Sacrifice.

Has this Ṛgvedic Sacrifice anything to do with Mysticism? We may be permitted to speak of Mysticism of two types, Spiritual Mysticism and Mechanical Mysticism. DASAGUPTA thought that he could discover only the latter type of mysticism in the Vedic Sacrifice and so he defined Mysticism in such a manner as to accommodate the type of mysticism that he discovered there. R. M. JONES defines mysticism as 'the historic doctrine of the relationship and potential union of the human soul with the Ultimate Reality' and the mystical

experience as 'direct intercourse with God'. What of this type of mysticism so far as the Ṛgvedic Sacrifice is concerned? Scholars have been, in general it might be said, unwilling to find this higher mysticism in the Ṛgveda. Thus MACNICOL observes (*ERE.* IX. p. 114 b) 'the indications of mystic attitude in the Ṛgvedic period are but few'; 'the religion of the hymns in the Ṛgveda is objective in character'. Another savant E. LEHMANN (*ERE.* IX. p. 85 a) observes 'religious mysticism as an intuitive and ecstatic union with the deity, by contemplative practices, is very rarely found among the primitive races. They lack the idea of God as a spiritual Universal being, which is theoretical presupposition of the elevating of the mind; and their lower stage of reflexion does not allow series of abstractions and psychological analysis ordinarily involved in the practices of the mystics'.

Thus the magical character of the Vedic Sacrifice in which MACDONELL and others following him believe, and the absence of any definite idea about the relationship of the individual soul and the Highest Reality in the Ṛgveda, in which LEHMANN and others who are inclined to accept his findings believe, are responsible for the generally accepted view that mysticism of the higher type, the spiritual type, is not to be found in the Ṛgveda.

I am inclined to observe that the Ṛgvedic Sacrifice and Religion have been treated by Western Scholars in a manner which hardly does full justice to them. To the Ṛgvedic poets the Sacrifice is not more powerful than the Gods as DASAGUPTA opines, nor is the Ṛgvedic Sacrifice predominantly magical in character as MACDONELL and KEITH think, nor are the Ṛgvedic Aryans as primitive as LEHMANN takes them to be. We must straight ask the question: Is the Ṛgvedic Sacrifice 'coercive' or 'persuasive'? There is a fundamental difference between the Poet, the Priest and the Magician which we cannot afford to ignore. The Poet and the Priest are, on their part, conscious of the higher aspects of Holy, Beauty and Divinity while the Magician's mental make-up is entirely different and of a mould which will not allow either the perception or the realization of these higher aspects. MACDONELL is speaking

constantly of the magician turning into a priest long before the Ṛgveda or even in the earliest period, the sacrificial priest being a magician as well. I do not deny altogether the possibility of the presence of the magical aspect in a sacrifice in the Ṛgvedic times but certainly would urge the view that the full development of this magical aspect is to be witnessed in the period of the Brāhmaṇas. Even in the Ṛgveda itself we are able to see a kind of development of this Sacrifice which is responsible for the thought of the Upaniṣads as well as that of the Brāhmaṇas. The Sacrifice of the Brāhmaṇas has its one current from the Ṛgveda tradition and the other from the Atharvaveda tradition and thus we have there a blend of the Priest and the Magician. As has been repeatedly observed, in the Ṛgveda we have the institution of Sacrifice evolving, developing and reaching its maturity. The Sacrifice has a definite purpose, it is performed with skill and the execution requires exertion and vigilance. In fact

'*Na ṛte śrāntasya sakhyāya devāḥ*' IV. 33. 11.

sums up all these ideas. What is the nature of the Ṛgvedic Sacrifice? E. O. JAMES (*ERE.* XI. pp. 5–7) points out the following ideas as connected with a sacrifice. (a) Communion (b) Conciliation (c) Honorific offering (d) Self-sacrifice. A critical study of the Ṛgvedic Sacrifice reveals that it is meant for securing conciliation and expressing a feeling of gratitude. The communion notion appears to be absent altogether. The various purposes of the sacrifice are propitiation, protection, attainment of fame, wealth, strength, progress and expiation. It is not merely 'give and take' or 'bargaining' as is commonly supposed. The sacrifice is connected with practically all the important ethical and moral ideas of the times. Thus it is connected with Ṛta, Creation, Devayāna and Pitṛyāṇa and so on. It has affected the imagery of the Ṛgvedic people and poets. So thorough has been the permeation, and so sublime has been the conception.

It was but natural that through this Sacrifice the Ṛgvedic mystics had the vision of the Highest Reality. To them, the sacrifice is not a mere performance of some magical or potent ritual with a view to getting what one or

the patron desires, but has become to them a symbol of the highest in life. Elevation of the deities and the sacrifice in their spiritual aspect need not surprise us or appear as impossible. Henotheism or Kathenotheism, may be the result of their rotation in the ritual as BLOOMFIELD thinks, yet it is a very important stage in the intellectual and moral development of the Ṛgvedic devotees. They are on their way of elevating the gods they worship and of realizing the oneness of them all. What has happened to the deities, has happened to the sacrifice as well. And thus arises the sacrificial mysticism of the Ṛgvedic times. I am of the view that even granting some magical mysticism in this sacrifice as MACDONELL thinks, there is much that is spiritual in character in it. Places like I. 72. 6. where twenty-one secrets are referred to; IV. 13 5. 14. 5. where Agni's mysterious climb is described; IX. 6. 9. where Soma is spoken of as bestowing some mystical qualities on the hymns; IV. 58. 1–3 where the mystic significance of Ghṛta is described; II. 36. 1; I. 162. 15; X. 115. 9; VII. 99. 7; I. 120. 4 describing the mystic power of Vaṣaṭ, are numerous indeed. Similarly certain figures are, it is thought, endowed with some mystic significance: thus the number 'three' is associated with powers, places, tongues and bodies of Agni at III. 20. 2; again III. 56; IV. 53, 5; IX. 74, 6 refer to number three in connection with the lustres, udders, forms and mothers of Agni, bringing gifts thrice and Savitṛ inspiring people thrice respectively. Another number that appears to have a similar significance is 'seven' and is used in the context of the Quarters, the Ādityas and the Hotṛs, as in IX. 114. 3. Agni is seven-tongued at III. 6. 2. The prayer is seven-fold at VIII. 51. 4 and X. 67. 1. The sacrifice has seven threads and seven lustres or places of residence as at X. 52. 4; 124. 1 and at IX. 102. 2. which speak of the Yajña being 'sapta-tantu' and having or possessing 'sapta-dhāmans'. At X. 13. 3 figures 'four' and 'five' have been used for mystical effect. Like these figures even secrets–guhyāni–and secret names are also spoken of. Thus at VIII. 80. 9 is given to us the 'fourth' name of the sacrifice. IX. 75. 2. speaks of the secret names of Soma and the sacrificer. Secrecy means in a way protection as can be seen from X. 5. 2. Again X. 45. 2. speaks of the secret names of Agni

and IX. 95. 2. suggests that these secret names were to be uttered at the time of the spreading of the sacred grass. It is but a gradual and next step from this conception of the mystical significance of figures and names to the conception of the mystical significance of the Hymns themselves : thus we have the Rathantara Sāman, VII. 32. 22–23, which is associated with the discovery of Sūrya as in I. 164. 25. Similarly the Bṛhat Sāman of the Bhāradvājas VI. 46. 1. or the Pṛṣṭha Sāman IV. 5. 6. are instances of this type. The Nivids also, whatever may be our view about them, like that of OLDENBERG that they are purely technical terms or like that of HAUG that they are parts of the ritual, there can be no doubt about the fact that they add to the mystical atmosphere of the sacrifice. It is also but natural that actions like the churning of the fire and the like should be endowed with a mystical meaning. The power of the Sacrifice and that of the prayer accompanying it was something that was actually perceived and experienced as the wish was granted and it is from this constant recurrence of this phenomenon that power of securing these effects was in course of time attributed to them. The Sacrifice is slowly getting the power to grant but nowhere are the gods belittled. The gods are constantly being requested to accept the sacrifice. In other words, the Devas have not as yet become the Devatās. The Ṛgvedic times witness the great glory of Indra, Varuṇa and others and in a similar manner that of the Sacrifice. The sacrifice with all its greatness and mystical significance is yet persuasive and not coercive. The power to produce results is felt to be belonging to the sacrifice but the overconfidence of the subsequent period has not yet dawned. The sacrifice is holy, great, powerful and with its procedure almost a replica of the universe. Gods in their task of creation also must have taken the help of this sacrifice. Thus the sacrifice becomes a metaphysical principle. It is this grand vision of the sacrifice in the Ṛgveda that is of greater importance than the mechanical significance, of figures, names and Sāmans which we have just now seen. The sacrifice which was just performed in the manner of the Aṅgirasas, Ātharvaṇas, Vasiṣṭhas and Jamadagni now becomes the 'prathama Dharma', first Law and even the gods have performed it and men imitate them. The Ṛgveda itself records

all this significant development. The sacrifice having its seat in the household, 'duroṇe' has its seat now in Ṛta. How many times the sacrifice and its accessories have been extolled as Ṛtasadana, Ṛtasya gopāḥ, Ṛtavṛdhaḥ, epithets which gods like Agni, Soma and others share in common with the Sacrifice. The Sacrifice did bring what was desired, 'vananīya, and 'īpsita' and therefore was Good and as it was essentially connected with Ṛta, therefore it was Holy, as well as Truth. The sacrifice had some order in the procedure, required some skill in its performance which naturally brought in art and therefore we do find expressions like 'Cāru' being used with reference to the sacrifice, the 'adhvara'. Thus the aesthetic aspect also is something that cannot be ignored. It is needless to refer to the intoxication of the sacrificers at the sight of the Soma and in this intoxication they give us fine ideas which throw light on this aspect of Beauty. We hear in IX. 78. 3.

> "Apsarases who dwell in waters of the sea, sitting within, have flowed to Soma, wise of heart,
>
> They urge the Master of the house upon his way, and to the Eternal Pavamāna pray for bliss."

And this Soma again is described as very handsome and beautiful in IX 77. 1.

> "More beauteous than the beautiful, as Indra's bolt, this Soma, Rich in sweets, hath clamoured in the vat.
>
> Dropping with oil, abundant, streams of sacrifice flow unto him.
>
> Like milch-kine, lowing, with their milk."

But we have the combination of Beauty and Truth in IX. 75. 2,

> "The Speaker, unassailable Master of this hymn, the Tongue of sacrifice pours forth the pleasant meath.
>
> Within the lustrous region of the heavens the Son makes the Third secret name of Mother and Sire".

It is to be noted that GRIFFITH has rendered Ṛta in '*ṛtasya jihvā*' as 'Sacrifice' which certainly is not a happy rendering. It ought to be as 'Tongue of Truth, Law or Order'

The development of Ritualistic Mysticism can well be studied with reference to Maṇḍala IX, the Book containing the songs addressed to Soma Pavamāna. There cannot be the slightest doubt about the ritualistic nature of these songs and in fact, the very urge, not only behind the songs but behind the very formation of the Maṇḍala itself is primarily Ritualistic. Another point of interest and importance is that we are able to study here the Aryan Mind and not the Mind of a particular family, for the songs in this Book are from various families. If the other Books have the unity of authorship and variety of Deities, this Book has a unity of the Deity and variety of authorship. Thus the Book gives us a picture of the ideas of the various poets hailing from different families, with reference to one and the same Deity. In a way we find the thought of a larger social group focussed on a single object, and in this fact lies its importance so far as the present discussion is concerned.

The arrangement of the Ṛgveda, however systematically done, is anything but chronological. As BERGAIGNE has already pointed out the various principles which appear to govern the internal arrangement of a Book, the points of reference for the Saṁhitākāras were, the Family, Deity, Metre and the Number of Ṛks in a Sūkta. Thus chronology or development of an idea was certainly out of question. But to my mind Book IX. reveals a certain development which is very instructive to a student who wants to study the development of the Ṛgvedic ideas with reference to a deity and also to a student of Ṛgvedic Mysticism. The ideas about Soma which have been just referred to above, IX. 78. 3; IX. 77.1 or IX. 75. 2. are the result of a development. The Soma, in reality, is nothing but a plant whose juice is the most exhilarating drink of the Ṛgvedic men. It naturally formed their most precious offering to the God and consequently it played a very important part in the sacrifices they performed. The juice of Soma could be secured and prepared with an elaborate procedure which itself assumed the nature of a ritual. The drink being a granter of energy and vigour came naturally to be associated with Indra, the God of energy and vigour. It is in this manner that the drink of the society

becomes the drink of the gods. But while this is happening the Plant is becoming a Deity, a King and not only the pressing but its purchase and bringing etc. become a part of the ritual. The ritualistic development can be understood as very natural as the Ṛgvedic Priests turned everything into Divine and Ritual.

Yet this ritualistic development of the Soma is but a part of the whole story. This alone cannot explain the paramount importance that the Soma had in the entire Ṛgvedic Culture. The Soma is viewed ritualistically, aesthetically, and with a religious consciousness and piety. It is said that we have in the Ṛgveda 'Mythology in the making'. It could be said with perhaps greater justification that we have in Maṇḍala IX, 'Mysticism in the making'. We see here simple actions becoming significant, myths being created and the plant becoming the symbol of the Highest Reality. By habit and by the training of the mind Aryans are almost put in a trance as it were and their minds begin to perceive something higher in the ordinary ritual of Soma, and as is the usual case, the cognate conceptions of Holy, Beauty and Reality come into play. All this is very clearly revealed in the Book we are discussing. The Soma mythology and the ritual have been discussed by abler scholars and masters like HILLEBRANDT, OLDENBERG and others, but here I present what I see and as I see in it.

These various songs can be arranged in a manner so as to reveal in a very clear manner the development we have been speaking about. In fact they appear to have been so arranged. Thus we, first, have the bare impressions about and of the Soma Pavamāna, the 'flowing Soma', then slowly the mythology and poetry begin to cluster round the Soma. He is called the Son of ten Maidens, for ten fingers produce it etc. Soon he is the Highest Reality and finally his divine presence is felt. The first stage is represented in songs 1–40 where the Soma is spoken of as the drink in vats, flowing through the fleece, as a favourite drink of Indra and also as a 'granter of high renown, kine, heroes, sons, wisdoms and light' as in song 9. Its physical effects are those of energy and delight and are referred to here.

The next stage is represented in hymns like 63 which describes the Soma as a Seer, Sage, Twin of Indra, the plant being personified as in 76.2. In connection with the Soma now romantic imagery comes into play as in 65.8-9. Its gold-hue is appreciated and constantly referred to as in 72.1; 96.2; 103-4; 11.1. Possessing such an impressive colour the Soma is then considered as Beautiful as in 15-5, 7; 36-4; 38-3; 43-1; 64-23; 66-25; 77-1; 96-20; the words used being 'Śumbhamāna, Rocana, Haryata-Kānta,' as Sāyaṇācārya understands; the root Mṛj and its derivatives: ideas as in '*vapuṣo vapuṣṭara; maryo na śubhraḥ tanvam mṛjāno*' etc. Soma is also described as Wondrous, 'adbhuta' as in 20-5. In this manner, in the Soma, Beauty and Wonder came to be perceived. He is Gandharva of the waters in 86.36; and related to Apsaras in 78.3. The Holy aspect of the Soma is sung of in songs like 39, 86, 97 and 110 where the Soma is brought into relation with the Gods, Sacrifice and Law. Thus in 39.1. the Soma is asked to flow to the dwelling of the gods—*yatra devā iti bravan.* In 86.28 the Soma is described as 'the Sovran Lord of all the world of life', 'having sway over the universe' and 'the first establisher of Law', '*tvam viśvasya bhuvanasya rājāsi*;: *athedam viśvam pavamāna te vaśe*; *tvam indo prathamo dhāmadhā asi*' etc. His kinship with the Gods is established in 10.8; 88.8; 108-12. He is called a Bird in 48.4; 82.3; 85.11. He is described as Viḥ. in 48.4; as Parṇin in 82.3 but 85.11 is interesting as it describes the Soma as the Eagle in the heaven and the Golden Bird: '*nāke Suparṇam, hiraṇyam Śakunam*'. This naturally brings the Soma into relation with the Sun who is also 'golden' and a 'patańga' and a 'Gandharva' as well. He is, therefore, described as the power behind the Sun in 28.5. which observes:

'*Eṣa sūryamarocayat pavamāno vicarṣaṇiḥ।*
viśvā dhāmāni viśvavit' ॥

He gave the splendour to the Sun and all his forms of light. We can hence understand 54.3. that Soma shining in his splendour and standing over the rest of the universe is just the Sun.

'Ayam viśvani tiṣṭhati punāno bhuvanopari।
somo devo na sūryaḥ'. ॥

In a similar strain are 69·5 describing the Soma as 'the golden-hued Immortal, 83·4 and 110·3 and 4 which credit the Soma for having produced the Sun-*ājijanaḥ sūryam-for* the maintenance of Law and lovely Amṛta. In this manner along with Beauty and Wonder, the ideas of the Holy and the Creator are also associated with Soma. Thus mystically understood, the Soma attains to the highest status and is able to give a vision of the Divine and the Highest to the Ṛgvedic poets. Against this background can now be understood 96·6 and 18 which I would call the 'Vibhūti-yoga' of the Soma. We are informed that Soma is

"Brahman of Gods, the Leader of the poets, Rishi of Sages, Bull of savage creatures,

Falcon amid the vultures, Axe of forests, over the cleansing sieve goes Soma singing. 6.

Light-winner, rishi-minded, rishi—maker, hymned in a thousand hymns, leader of sages,

A seer who strives to gain his third form, Soma is, like Virāj, resplendent as a singer". 18.

In this latter Ṛk the wording '*ṛṣimanaḥ yaḥ ṛṣikṛt*' deserves our attention for it has the germs of the 'stotra' style and easily calls to one's mind works like the 'Viṣṇusahasranāma'. Viewed in this manner the Soma becomes a Creator. Thus 96·5 runs as

"Father of holy hymns, Soma flows onward, the Father of the earth,

Father of heaven;

Father of Agni, Sūrya's generator, the Father who begat Indra and Vishnu". 5. 96.

The foregoing discussion will have made clear the process by which Soma came to be looked upon as the Highest Reality. This is no doubt the result of the contemplative and mystic tendencies, and the culmination of these

tendencies and perception of the Soma as the Highest Reality, Truth and Power can best be seen in 113. 7–9.

"O Pavamana, place me in that deathless, undecaying world.

Wherein the light of heaven is set, and everlasting lustre shines.

Flow, Indu for Indra's sake.

Make me immortal in that realm where dwells the king, Vivasvan's son,

Where is the secret shrine of heaven, where are those waters young and fresh.

Flow, Indu for Indra's sake.

Make me immortal in that realm where they move even as they list,

In the third sphere of inmost heaven where lucid worlds are full of light.

Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

Make me immortal in that realm of eager wish and strong desire,

The region of the radiant Moon, where food and full delight are found.

Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

Make me immortal in that realm where happiness and transports,

Where Joys and felicities combine, and longing wishes are fulfilled.

Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake".

Here we see the usual Petitional Prayer becoming religiously significant and developing into a Prayer for Communion. Further this prayer takes us into the sphere of the Upaniṣadic thought, not merely in concept but in phraseology as well. We find in this hymn the significant phrases 'Ajasram Jyotis, Amṛta, Anukāmam caraṇam, Lokāḥ jyotiṣmantaḥ, Kāmā nikāmāśca, Ānandaśca modaśca, mudaḥ pramuda, Kāmasya āptāḥ kāmāḥ' etc. which no doubt contain the material as well as the suggestions for the celebrated Doctrine of Libera-

tion and of Realization of Self. It is all the more significant that in this very hymn we have a reference to Soma as

Ṛtavākena satyena śraddhayā tapasā suta। 2
Ṛtam vadan ṛtadyumna satyam vadan satyasarman
Śraddhām vadan Soma rājan dhātrā Soma pariṣkṛta। 4.

where ethical qualities are referred to.

This is the story of the development of Soma Mysticism that Maṇḍala IX reveals. To my mind this development is very significant for almost all the ideas of importance in this respect, those of Beauty, Truth, Ethical Purity and Highest Joy appear here and on account of association with these ideas the ritualistic plant-juice Soma becomes the symbol of the Divine. The Solar element also deserves notice, as it establishes a connection of the Soma mysticism with the Sun mysticism which latter is the real Ṛgvedic mysticism. And thus on numerous occasions do we find flights of fancies in which mysticism is to be traced. Ordinary things are taking on a rich significance of something truly great, are becoming a symbol of something that is at once beautiful, holy and connected with Ṛta. It is not only Soma that sends the ritualistic mystics into the highest raptures but Agni Vaiśvānara also does the same and the hymns addressed to him are very interesting. Slowly, from the perception of the sacrificial fire emerges the sublime conception of the Agni Vaiśvānara, the principle present in every being, responsible for life and thought, the conception of the Universal Self. Thus in VI. 9. a Bhāradvāja is stirred to sing :

> One half of day is dark, and bright the other: both atmospheres move on by sage devices.
> Agni Vaiśvānara, when born as Sovran, hath with his lustre overcome the darkness. 1.
> I know not either warp or woof, I know not the web they weave when moving to the contest.
> Whose son shall here speak words that must be spoken without assistance from the Father near him ? 2.
> For both the warp and the woof he understandeth, and in due time shall speak what should be spoken,

Who knoweth as the immortal world's Protector, descending, seeing with no aid from other. 3.

He is the Priest, the first of all: behold him. Mid mortal men he is the light immortal.

Here was he born, firm-seated in his station, Immortal, ever waxing in his body. 4.

A firm light hath been set for men to look on; among all things that fly the mind is swiftest.

All Gods of one accord, with one intention, move unobstructed to a single purpose. 5.

Mine ears unclose to hear, mine eye to see him; the light that harbours in my spirit broadens.

Far roams my mind whose thoughts are in the distance. What shall I speak, what shall I now imagine? 6.

All the Gods bowed them down in fear before thee, Agni, when thou wast dwelling in the darkness.

Vaiśvānara, be gracious to assist us, may the Immortal favour us and help us. 7.

How the mysteries of the sacrifice and of Agni have impressed the mystic is worth noticing. GRASSMANN imagines a more worldly context for this sublime song in that he thinks that here a young poet, who is nervous before a contest with older bards is invoking Agni for inspiration. I would prefer to be guided by the indications in the song itself. Is the poet not directly speaking of '*Amṛtam Jyotiḥ martyeṣu* (4) *Dhruvam Jyotiḥ*, (5) and also of the fact that the mind, ears, eyes—manaḥ, karṇa and cakṣuḥ—fly differently to find it out or as Sāyaṇācārya puts it beautifully 'the senses almost compete with each other in trying to grasp it'? Again is not the poet here conscious of the light within, *jyotiḥ hṛdaye āhitam*? The mysterious principle behind the sacrifice and the universe and the human beings is just the same.

According to HAUG, the songs of Nābhānediṣṭha X. 61 and 62 are also instances of sacrificial or ritualistic mysticism. It is true that the hymns in question are as LUDWIG and GRIFFITH observe 'the most difficult, one might say most

hopeless, portions of the Ṛgveda'. The song X. 61 is very patchy in character, for the opening appears to refer to some historical narrative, then a few verses refer to the mythological narrative of the lust of Prajāpati for his daughter and throughout are to be seen references to the sacrifice—*Vitam Yajñam* etc. But with all this in mind, I, for my present purpose, would like to concentrate our attention on the verses 18 and 19 of the song where Nābhānediṣṭha, rising gradually in his ritualistic mysticism utters the sublime:

> Their kin, the Prince in heaven, thy nearest kinsman, turning his thought to thee thus speaks in kindness :
>
> This is our highest bond : I am his offspring. How many others come ere I succeeded. 18.
>
> Here is my kinship, here the place I dwell in : these are my Gods ; I in full strength am present.
>
> Twice-born am I, the first-born Son of Order : the Cow milked this when first she had her being.

Nābhānediṣṭha is here realizing his kinship with the Sun in the heavens and through him has become one with the Universe as Sāyaṇācārya points out. We have here the Bandhutva established and also the consequent realization that '*Aham asmi sarvaḥ*'. He has certainly reached the Upaniṣadic conclusion '*Sarvam khalu idam yad ayam ātmā*'. The identity with the Sun also is very significant for how often do the Upaniṣads speak of the Ādityapuruṣa who is 'Hiraṇmaya' as being identical with the reality in man. I do not agree with GRIFFITH who remarks that Agni is the speaker of these verses, especially of the verse 19, for do we not have a direct '*Nābhānediṣṭhaḥ rapati*' in verse 18? Why imagine Agni as the speaker all of a sudden? Nābhānediṣṭha Mānava is to be regarded as a very interesting ritualistic mystic who has richly contributed to the Ṛgvedic mystical thought. Regarding the name of this mystic POTDAR observes 'The name Nābhānediṣṭha, it may be noted, is perhaps an illustration of the tradition of assuming a secret name for the purposes of a sacrificial performance. It is a name that is very obviously suggested by the vicinity of the person to the 'vedi' and which could remain a secret and produce the

desired mystical effect for the purposes of the sacrifice. It is also possible that the name has been adopted by the poet on account of his constant association with the sacrificial performances as the officiating priest of the same'. (p. 220). It is true that the word 'Nābhi' might mean the Vedi and 'nediṣṭha' is one who is 'nearest'. But I have to say that the poet does not here keep us in doubt as to what is the 'nābhi' in his case. He himself explains in verse 18 that the Sun is the 'nābhi' and he is, as he affirms, 'nearest' to that, 'nābhi'. The name Nābhānediṣṭha, therefore, is a mystical one and means 'one who has realized his nearest relationship with the Āditya' or 'one who is nearest to the nābhi, the Sun'. There cannot be any doubt about the fact that this is mystical experience of the highest type, and the name chosen proudly conveys that. Among the Ṛgvedic mystics, Nābhānediṣṭha thus occupies a unique place. The importance of the Sun in his religious or mystical experience also deserves notice. But perhaps Nārāyaṇa, the Ṛṣi of X.90, the celebrated Puruṣa Sūkta, is to be regarded as the greatest of the ritualistic mystics of the Ṛgvedic times. He believes in the tradition of sacrifice and in fact traces it to the Gods who performed the primal sacrifice which brought forth the Universe and its contents of infinite variety. To the priests, the sacrifice produces only what is desired, it is performed by the devotee and accepted by the gods; but to Nārāyaṇa the gods themselves perform a sacrifice and the Universe is an outcome of such a divine sacrifice. Sacrifice is the ultimate reality. It is the 'sarva-huta yajña' that has produced everything. The hymn contains many suggestions of fundamental importance: thus the idea that the reality is present in the universe itself, or again the idea of the connection that is sought to be established between the created entity and the limb of Virāj may be referred to. This latter relation is of a mystical nature: the relation between the Moon and the Mind, the Sun and the Eye, the Agni and the mouth, the Prāṇa and the Vāyu. These suggestions have been, it is seen, accepted by later philosophical thought and are in the main responsible for the notion of a close correspondence between the macrocosm and the microcosm, with which we come across in the Upaniṣads.

The song gives the vision of Nārāyaṇa, which is simply astounding and at his hands the sacrifice has attained a rich metaphysical and cosmological significance. He asserts that the Sacrifice was the 'prathama dharma'. The Ṛgvedic thought has been considered to be 'objective' by MACNICOL (ERE. IX. p. 114. b) and LEHMANN thinks 'religious mysticism, an intuitive and ecstatic union with the deity by contemplative practices' to be rare among the primitive races. The foregoing discussion I believe, has brought out the limitations of these observations. The Ṛgvedic poet has consciousness of the Self, the Spirit, and is aware of the effects of his religious acts and of nature phenomenon on his spirit. Further in his ritual itself, engrossed as he is, he finds the symbols of something higher and ultimately we see that through contemplation on Agni Vaiśvānara, the Āditya or the Sacrifice, as in the cases of Bhāradvāja, Nābhānediṣṭha and Nārāyaṇa, they have the intuitive and ecstatic union with the highest. The Ṛgvedic ritualistic mystics, so far as the ultimate experiences are concerned do not differ from the Philosophical mystics. Thus the thought of Nābhānediṣṭha, that he is all, can be compared with a similar idea of Vāmadeva IV. 26.1. where he identifies himself with various personalities, like Manu, Sūrya, Kakṣivān etc. Here is a ritualistic mystic imitating the Nāsadīya Sūkta and giving us a song which would fittingly sum up as well as illustrate our foregoing discussion.

> The sacrifice drawn out with threads on every side, stretched by a hundred sacred ministers and one, —
>
> This do these Fathers weave who hitherward are come: they sit beside the warp and cry, Weave forth, Weave back. 1.
>
> The Man extends it and the Man unbinds it: even to this vault of heaven hath he outspun it.
>
> These pegs are fastened to the seat of worship: they made the Sāma hymns their weaving shuttles. 2.
>
> What were the rule, the order and the model? What were the wooden fender and the butter?
>
> What were the hymn, the chant, the recitation, when to the God all Deities paid worship? 3.

Closely was Gāyatri cojoined with Agni, and closely Savitṛ cojoined with Uṣṇiḥ.

Brilliant with Ukthas, Soma joined with Anuṣṭup : Bṛhaspati's voice by Bṛhati was aided. 4.

Virāj adhered to Varuṇa and Mitra : here Triṣṭup day by day was Indra's portion.

Jagati entered all the Gods together : so by this knowledge men were raised to Ṛṣis. 5,

So by this knowledge men were raised to Ṛṣis, when ancient sacrifice sprang up, our Fathers.

With the mind's eye I think that I behold them who first performed this sacrificial worship. 6.

They who were versed in ritual and metre, in hymns and rules, were the Seven Godlike Ṛṣis.

Viewing the path of those of old, the sages have taken up the reins like chariot-drivers. X. 130.

An exquisite combination of the Puruṣa Sūkta and the Nāsadīya Sūkta !

CHAPTER THREE

PHILOSOPHICAL MYSTICS

Why is it that we are going to describe the poets whom we are discussing now, as 'Philosophical Mystics'? Do not philosophy, religion and devotion go together? And if these three go together, is such a differentiation as philosophical mystics, devotional and religious mystics justifiable? The reply to such a querry would be in the affirmative, for in the first instance, it is very convenient to have such classes for the sake of discussion and secondly there is a significant difference in the approaches of these different types of mystics, towards their subject. It would be seen that devotional mystics have a greater appeal to emotion and the philosophical mystics present their convictions in a philosophic form which has a greater appeal to the intellect; yet appeal to the emotion is not altogether ruled out, but is evidently subordinate. Such writers are markedly intellectual and they are primarily concerned with Truth or Wisdom. We will not, for obvious reasons enter into the learned controversy regarding the relation between intellectualism and mysticism, though out of sheer necessity we have to touch the topic. Intellectualism generally opposes two very essential qualities of mysticism; 'reverence and ascension of thought.' Miss UNDERHILL (*The Mystic Way* p. 8) after voicing forth the soul's perennial question, Whither, observes 'To address such a question to our intellect is to invite failure in the reply; for the careful mosaic of neatly fitted conceptions which those intellects will offer in return will have none of the peculiar qualities of life: it will be but a 'practical simplification of reality', made by that well-trained sorting machine in the interests of our daily needs. Only by a direct contact with life in its wholeness can we hope to discern its drift, to feel the pulsations of its mighty rhythm; and this we can never contrive save by the help of those who by loyal service and ever-renewed effort have vanquished the crystallising tendencies of thought and attained an immediate if imperfect communion with Reality-' that race of divine men who through a more excellent power

and with piercing eyes acutely perceive the supernal light'— the artists, the poets, the prophets, the seers; the happy owners of unspoilt perceptions, the possessors of that intuition which alone is able to touch upon absolute things'.

In this controversy regarding Life versus Thought it would be more prudent to remember what Mrs. HERMANN has observed: 'And as a matter of hard fact, there is no logician so "logical" as to deny that the most important and influential realities come to us by way of intuition or insight, just as there is no mystic so "mystical" as not to apply his reflective reason to the experience gained in a moment of supreme insight, or to shrink from employing his best reasoning powers to persuade himself and the world that reason is a most inferior and clumsy instrument. Moreover, the most purely practical and devotional mystics were also the most slow to accept the uncorroborated testimony of their intuitions, and had recourse at every step to the faculty they most despised to sift and correct the reports of the faculty they most valued'. (*Meaning and Value of Mysticism*, p. 254). Thus mysticism is always a curious blend of the two powers of man, intellect and intuition. In some of the songs of the Ṛgveda this blend is to be very clearly seen and therefore so far as the mysticism of these songs we are now considering is concerned, we have chosen to term it as 'philosophical mysticism'.

All philosophy starts with doubts and questions. A certain uneasiness, intellectual dissatisfation is felt with the state of the things given, beliefs held and questions start, an indication of the disturbed mind. The Ṛgveda clearly shows us these very early beginnings of the philosophical thought as for instance in II. 12, the famous '*sa janāsa Indraḥ*' Sūkta, all the great deeds of Indra are extolled and his greatness is urged upon the minds of others but the Sūkta bears an appearance of a spirited effort to stabilise a shaken faith. Gṛtsamada has been perhaps urged to an inspired eulogy of the greatest of the Vedic Gods by verse 5 which states that

> Of whom, the Terrible, they ask, Where is he? Or verily they say of him, He is not.

He sweeps away, like birds, the foe's possessions. Have faith in him, for He, O men, is Indra II.12.5,

If here a doubt is expressed about the very existence of Indra and an appeal is made for faith in the greatest god of the Ṛgvedic pantheon, Vāmadeva perhaps inflicts a greater indignity on him by exposing him for a sale as in IV. 24.9-10.

He bid a small price for a thing of value: I was content, returning, still unpurchased.

He heightened not his insufficient offer. Simple and clever, both milk out the udder. 9.

Who for ten milch-kine purchaseth from me this Indra who is mine? When he has slain the Vṛtras let the buyer give him back to me. 10.

In such an atmosphere it would be quite easy to understand that the very existence of Indra was doubted. In the song of Gṛtsamada, the doubt is referred to and the poet tries to remove it by a vigorous description of the greatness of the god as the constant refrain and the enumeration of the exploits of the god would indicate. But here is another place at which the doubt had to be removed by Indra himself by appearing personally. Thus we read at VIII. 100. 3-4. (according GRIFFITH VIII. 89..3-4).

Striving for strength bring forth a laud to Indra, truthful hymn if he in truth existeth.

One and another say, There is no Indra. Who hath beheld him? Whom then shall we honour? 3

Here am I, look upon me here, O singer. All that existeth I surpass in greatness.

The Holy Law's commandments make me mighty. Rending with strength I rend the worlds asunder. 4.

It is noteworthy that the doubt is expressed as '*Indrāya satyam yadi satyam asti*' and further that Indra's all surpassing greatness is due to the commandments of the Holy Law—*ṛtasya pradiśaḥ*. According to the commentator, Sāyaṇācārya,

the ṛṣi who doubted this very existence of Indra is Nema. Once doubts were entertained about Indra, it was neither unnatural nor a far distant event to entertain a doubt about the existence of the other deities. And indeed, in X.121 we get the very significant and interesting question in a ritualistic age as to whom we shall offer the offering—*kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema*. The very refrain of the song conveys the dominant idea of the poet and the idea to interpret Ka as Prajāpati must be regarded as far-fetched. Gods rise and sink with the march and progress of speculative philosophy. The song X.121 makes a significant advance over the mere doubts of Nema and others and puts in a straight manner the metaphysical questions and voices forth the longing to find out the Lord with Truth as his attribute–'*Satyadharman*'–responsible for the creation—*yaḥpṛthivyāḥ janitā*–and *yo divam jajāna* : the song runs as

> In the beginning rose Hiraṇyagarbha, born Only Lord of all created beings.
>
> He fixed and holdeth up this earth and heaven. What God shall we adore with our oblation ? 1.
>
> Giver of vital breath, of power and vigour, he whose commandments all the Gods acknowledge :
>
> The Lord of death, whose shade is life immortal. What God shall we adore with our oblations ? 2.
>
> Who by his grandeur hath become Sole Ruler of all the moving world that breathes and slumbers ;
>
> He who is Lord of men and Lord of cattle. What God shall we adore with our oblations ? 3.
>
> His, through his might, are these snow-covered mountains, and men call sea and Rasa his possession :
>
> His arms are these, his are these heavenly regions. What God shall we adore with our oblation ? 4.
>
> By him the heavens are strong and earth is steadfast, by him light's realm and sky-vault are supported .
>
> By him the regions in mid-air were measured. What God shall we adore with our oblation? 5.

To him, supported by his help, two armies embattled look while trembling in their spirit,

When over them the risen Sun is shining. What God shall we offer our offering ? 6.

What time the mighty waters came containing the universal germ producing Agni.

Thence sprang the God's one spirit into being. What God shall we offer our offering ? 7.

He in his might surveyed the floods containing productive force and generating Worship.

He is the God of gods, and none beside him. What God shall we adore with our oblation ? 8.

Never may he harm us who is earth's Begetter, nor he whose laws are sure, the heavens' Creator,

He who brought forth the great and lucid waters. What God shall we adore with our oblation ? 9.

Prajāpati, thou only comprehendest all these created things, and none beside thee.

Grant us our hearts' desire when we invoke thee : may we have store of riches in possession. 10.

It is to be noted that Prajāpati means Lord of Life and Savitṛ, the Sun is so called at 1V. 53.2. The Hymn X. 121 deserves to be quoted in full as it is very important among the philosophical hymns of the Ṛgveda and being such has received careful treatment at the hands of learned scholars like MUIR, MAX MÜLLER, WALLIS, PETERSON and L. SCHERMAN. It clearly reflects the atmosphere and tendency of doubt and quest and is a fine illustration of the first throes of the birth of speculative philosophy. There should not be any doubt that the poet is seeking here the vision of the Highest Reality connected with creation, immortality and grandeur; which is being conceived as the god of gods, the Sole Ruler and whose commandments all the gods acknowledge. It is the Sun God where he gets this vision as the god is directly mentioned in ṛk 6 '*yatra adhi sūra udito vibhāti*' which perhaps takes one to something superior to the Sun. The phrases *Hiraṇyagarbha* (1), *chāyāmṛtam* (2), *Ātmadā*

Upāsate (2), *Yaḥ īśe jagataḥ* (3), *yasya pradiśaḥ* (4), and '*yatra adhi sūra udito vibhāti* (6) establish a connection with the Upaniṣadic philosophical thought, especially with the Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad. The term Hiraṇyagarbha is indeed significant for in the Ṛgveda, the Savitṛ is 'a pre-eminently golden deity'. A reference to I.35. can be made in this connection, for this song alone uses the following terms : '*hiraṇyayena rathena* (2) *hiraṇyaśamyam* (4) *hiraṇyaprauga* (5) *hiraṇyākṣaḥ* (8) *hiraṇyapāṇiḥ* (9) *iraṇhyahastaḥ* (10)'. The various formations of the root '*Su*' clearly show that he is connected with the sense of the functions of stimulating, arousing and vivifying. He is possibly thought of here in *X*. 121 and the phrase '*satyadharman*' (9) is also very significant. Considering all these scattered threads in the song, it appears to me, that it is some such thought that is present in the Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad. 15

'*Hiraṇmayena pātreṇa satyasyāpihitam mukham*
Tattvam pūṣan apāvṛṇu satyadharmāya dṛṣṭaye ॥' 15

for this verse also expresses a craving for a vision of the Lord with Truth as his attribute-*satyadharman* (of. X. 121. 9). I prefer to understand the Upaniṣadic dative '*satyadharmāya*' as genitive '*satyadharmaṇaḥ*' – a way supported by other Upaniṣadic passages as for example '*sa yathā vīṇāyai vādyamānāyai* etc. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. 4·5. 10. The Reality and Hiraṇya in the earlier literature are closely connected. It implies grandeur and it is the reason why the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa is seen equating it with, 'a significant form' in '*rūpam hiraṇyam*' A. B. 7.13.6. From all this discussion it would appear that Nārāyaṇa, the poet of X. 121 is trying to reach the 'golden truth' behind the gods, possessed as he is by the doubt as to which of the gods deserves his adoration, the very burden of his song. It is a significant thing that hymns are composed in honour of Faith X.151 and in honour of moral actions X.117. It is true that the Ṛgvedic gods have a double aspect, the mythological and the moral one and as the particular concept advances, the mythological aspect recedes into background and the moral aspect becomes predominant. It is by such a process that the different mighty gods of the Ṛgvedic times become fused into one Brahman, the Highest Reality, the Yakṣa of the Upaniṣadic times.

(Kena Up. 3). And it is therefore that the hymns, as the present one, which indicate this progress, describe to us the vision of the Reality of the Ṛgvedic poets.

There are other philosophical hymns also and this group may be said to consist of the Hymns to Viśvakarman X.81.82, the famous Nāsadīya Hymn X.129; and the Song of Dīrghatamas Māmateya I.164. In the Hymns to Viśvakarman, the poet is again and again expressing his desire to know the Maker, the Creator and wants to know the full story of the creation. He asks in X.81.

He who sate down as Hotṛ-priest, the Ṛṣi, our Father, offering up all things existing—

He seeking through his wish a great possession, came among men on earth as archetypal. 1.

What was the place whereon he took his station ? What was it that supported him ? How was it ?

Whence Viśvakarman, seeing all, producing the earth, with mighty powers disclosed the heavens. 2.

He who hath eyes on all sides round about him, a mouth on all sides, arms and feet on all sides,

He, the Sole God, producing earth and heaven, weldeth them, with his arms as wings, together. 3.

What was the tree, what wood in sooth produced it, from which they fashioned out the earth and heaven ?

Ye thoughtful men, inquire within your spirit whereon he stood when he established all things. 4.

Thine highest, lowest, sacrificial natures, and these thy mid-most here, O Viśvakarman,

Teach thou thy friends at sacrifice, O Blessed, and come thyself exalted to our worship. 5.

Bring thou thyself, exalted with oblation, O Viśvakarman, Earth and Heaven to worship.

Let other men around us live in folly : here let us have a rich and liberal patron. 6.

Let us invoke today, to aid our labour, the Lord of speech, the thought-swift Viśvakarman.

May he hear kindly all our invocations who gives all bliss for aid, whose words are righteous. 7.

The song is very significant and important from various points of view. That there are certain references to the sacrifice should not go against the philosophical character of the hymn and make one regard it as ritualistic in nature and a priestly product. For the Sacrifice is the 'take-off' ground from which the Ṛgvedic poets take their start for their flights and then soar high. Here is a direct and clear reference to the fact that the wise in their minds ask questions about the '*Ārambhaṇa*' and the '*Adhiṣṭhana* (2) words and concepts that take us in the Upaniṣadic period. The hymn tells us that the question asked is '*Kim svidvanam*' (4) and this also, to my mind, points to the Upaniṣadic '*Tadvanam*'. (Kena. 4.31). The explanation offered of the word as '*sarveṣām vananīyam*' etc. is obviously far-fetched and the word in all probability had a metaphysical significance. Viśvakarman is 'father of the race' –*pitā naḥ*–, for biologically it is the father who creates. Further he is a carpenter and fashioned the universe out of the first wood. Has the Sūtra of Bādarāyaṇa '*Yathā ca takṣā ubhayathā*' II.3.40 anything to do with this concept ? At present it is explained as illustrating the intermittant activ ity of the soul. In a similar manner the description given in 3. as well as the wording

'*Viśvataścakṣ ur uta viśvatomukho viśvatobāhuruta viśvataspāt*' (3 ab) is no doubt the original of the later Upaniṣadic as well as the Bhagavadgītā description of the Reality as '*sarvataḥ pāṇipādam* etc. (BG. 13.13).

But perhaps X.82 is more important. It runs thus :

The Father of the eye, the wise in spirit, created both these worlds submerged in fatness.

Then when the eastern ends were firmly fastened, the heavens and the earth were far extended.

Mighty in mind and power is Viśvakarman, Maker, Disposer and most lofty Presence.

Their offerings joy in rich juice where they value One, only One beyond the Seven Ṛṣis, 2.

Father who made us, he who, as Disposer, knoweth all races and all things existing.

Even he alone, the Deities' name-Giver,-him other beings seek for information. 3.

To him in sacrifice they offered treasures.—Ṛṣis of old, in numerous troops, as singers,

Who, in the distant, near, and lower region, made ready all these things that have existence. 4.

That which is earlier than this earth and heaven, before the Asuras and the Gods had being,—

What was the germ primeval which the waters received where all the Gods were seen together ? 5.

The waters, they received that germ primeval wherein the Gods were gathered all together.

It rested set upon the Unborn's navel, that One wherein abide all things existing. 6.

Ye will not find him who produced these creatures : another thing hath risen up among you.

Enrapt in misty cloud, with lips that stammer, hymn-chanters wander and are discontented. 7.

Already the poet tells us 'another thing hath risen among you' and this the commentators explain as 'individual consciousness' or 'an anxiety for the enjoyments in this world'. Knowledge of Truth or the Mystic's Glimpse is a privilege that does not belong to the common man. The hymn is obscure no doubt and M. WILLIS is right when he observes that here is 'no attempt to explain in what way the process of sacrifice could be regarded as an act of creation. We are told that Viśvakarman was a primeval sacrificer and also a creator : we have no hint how to combine the two ideas into a harmonious unity. LUDWIG and MUIR have in their notes made an attempt to solve some of the difficulties of the hymn.

From our point of view, it is interesting to note the assertion that 'Ye will not find him who produced these creatures : another thing hath risen up among you' : *'na tam vidāthā ya imā jajāna anyad yuṣmākam antaram babhūva'* 7. (ab) for this reminds one of the Taittīriya Upaniṣad II.7.

'Yadā hyevaiṣa etasmin udaram antaram kurute
atha tasya bhayam bhavati' ॥

Similarly there is a clear realization of the limitations of human intellect and also the ultimate despair that is the lot of the mystic who embarks on the path of the 'Knowledge of Truth, the Maker'. The 'Divine Discontent' of the singers is happily expressed in the last ṛk. The description :'enrapt in misty cloud-*nīhāreṇa prāvṛtā*' is very significant for it again takes us to the Upaniṣadic mystics who are seen observing that '*nīhāra*' is the first visitation of the Divine. The S'vetāśvatara Upaniṣad II.11 runs as

'Nīhāra-dhūma-arka-anala-anilānām khadyota-
vidytsphaṭika-aśanīnām.
Etāni rūpāṇi puraḥsarāṇi brahmaṇyabhivyaktikarāṇi
yoge ॥

In a similar manner it is very significant that here are referred to the concepts of One, only One-*para eka* (2) Name-giving activity-*devānām nāmadhā* (3) the navel of the Unborn-*ajasya nābhiḥ*-concepts which are of paramount importance from the point of view of the Upaniṣadic philosophy. To me, the present hymn is an extremely well-knit and artistic expression of the first visitations of the Highest. The poet starts for the glimpse of the Reality in the usual manner, tries to have a vision of the Maker, who is Only One, Maker of the Gods, reaches upto the first Nīhāra stage and then with the Divine Discontent returns. Almost a Kālidāsian Arthāntaranyāsa generalising the experience of the Mystics clinches the fine poem :

'Nīhāreṇa prāvṛtā jalpyā cāsutṛpa ukthaśāsaścaranti'. ॥
7. (*cd*).

Utterances like these prove beyond doubt that the famous Nāsadīya Sūkta X.129 is not an isolated phenomenon but is just a product of the times. The thinkers are seen making

deliberate and determined effort to fathom the mystery of the universe and of its creator. Obviously they are not satisfied with the traditional answers and want to go behind the gods themselves, the erst-while accepted makers of the universe. The poet of this celebrated and oft-quoted song goes on :

> Then was not non-existent nor existent : there was no realm of air, no sky beyond it.
>
> What covered in, and where ? and what gave shelter ? was water there, unfathomed depth of water ? 1.
>
> Death was not then, nor was there aught immortal : no sign was there, the day's and night's divider.
>
> That One Thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature : apart from it was nothing whatsoever. 2.
>
> Darkness there was : at first concealed in darkness this All was indiscriminated chaos.
>
> All that existed then was void and formless : by the great power of Warmth was born that Unit. 3.
>
> Thereafter rose Desire in the beginning, Desire, the primal seed and germ of Spirit.
>
> Sages who searched with their heart's thought discovered the existent's kinship in the non-existent. 4.
>
> Transversely was their severing line extended : what was above it then, and what below it ?
>
> There were begetters, there were mighty forces, free action here and energy up yonder. 5.
>
> Who verily knows and who can here declare it, whence it was born and whence comes this creation ?
>
> The Gods are later than this world's production. Who knows then whence it first came into being ? 6.
>
> He, the first origin of this creation, whether he formed it all or did not form it,
>
> Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven, he verily knows it, or perhaps he knows it not. 7.

It is not surprising at all that this song should have received close attention from Indologists, COLEBROOKE, MUIR, M. WALLIS, WHITNEY, SCHERMAN, and MAX MÜLLER. But

the reaction and the estimate of all these scholars is neither identical nor uniform. Thus MAX MÜLLER is full of rapture at '*Ānīdavātam svadhayā tadekam*' and remarks 'Language blushes at such expressions, but her blush is a blush of triumph'. WHITNEY finds this praise as extravagant. Whatever may be our ultimate estimate of this song with reference to the meaning and value of its thought, it cannot be gainsaid that it is a remarkable experience clothed in also a remarkable expression. Intuition and Intellect both operate in it and it is a fine mystic utterance. The passion for the quest of reality dominates the rational search for it. One is tempted to say that here we have what may be called the 'direct perception of the real and not a rational or non-mystical consciousness based upon the understanding or senses alone'. The spiritual immediacy which is the 'very essence of true Mysticism' is seen here. The poet is not now satisfied with the Gods for these are 'Later than the World's production'. He appears to have vaguely perceived the 'One breathless' yet breathing by its own nature. Out of the indiscriminated chaos, void and formless came the universe. Sages searching with their heart's desire discovered the relation of the Sat with the Asat. With this very important conclusion reached, the hymn in question does not remain a mere series of questions and doubts. Childlike simplicity and depth natural to the period of the human race are the chief attractions of this song. 'Everywhere to possess Reality is an arduous task; stability and solidity are not in the beginning, but if anywhere only in proportion as we enter upon the larger vistas of things'. If we keep in our mind this judgment of BOSANQUET (p. 7) the song would not be altogether meaningless.

Here (III.38) is another Ṛgvedic poet Prajāpati Viśvāmitra singing of Indra in a mystical as well as philosophical manner. GRIFFITH is of the view that the poet is here intentionally obscure and that the hymn is in parts unintelligible. Read as it is, the hymn is no doubt to all appearance a patchwork of ideas and no logical connection appears in its different parts. But if read as an utterance of a Vedic mystic it may be possible for us to discover cogency in the song and a sort of

gradual ascent in the thoughts of the poet. That the poet is in a contemplative mood is clear from his

> Pondering what is dearest and most noble, I long to see the sages full of wisdom. 1.

and he also declares the purpose of his desire to see the sages as that of asking the mighty generations the mystery of creation, to which a reference is made in 3 and 4 in 'fixed broad expanses' 'set the great worlds apart held firm for safety'. These creators while in the act of creation assumed 'mysterious natures' and thinking of the creators in this manner it is but natural and in keeping with the chief trend of Ṛgvedic mysticism that he discovers the Sun, the Bull. To a Ṛgvedic mystic the Sun with its splendours is the Reality, Holy as well as Beautiful and this perception of the beautiful Solar phenomenon is described in

> There saw I, going thither in the spirit, Gandharvas in their course with wind-blown tresses. 6

and further at this perception of the glorious wonder of colours of gold, of the Dawn and the Sun he perceives a new figure arising in front of him for he tells us

> Enduing still some new celestial figure, the skillful workers shaped a form around him. 7.

The supreme delight that he enjoys in this vision of his, of the Sun is a precious possession of the poet and in that ecstasy he sings full of joy, enthusiasm and holy feeling and all this finds an expression in

> Let no one here debar me from enjoying the golden light which Savitṛ diffuses.
>
> He covers both all-fostering worlds with praises even as a woman cherishes her children. 8.

Reality acting towards its votary like a loving mother ! The same Reality acts like a protector for its 'voice is like a herdsman's'.

Thus here also we have contemplation over the problem of creation and then the poet describes something that he 'sees'. The vision, as we have seen, is of the Sun and the poet

also sings of the highest and pure delight that he has from this vision, a vision in which he does not want to be disturbed. It is really something strange that verse 8 should be regarded as 'hardly intelligible' by GRIFFITH. The only difficulty is about the mention of Indra in the only and the last verse of the hymn. I can think of two explanations, for the two concepts of Indra and of the Sun meet in the concept of Bull which is referred to in 4 and 5. Both these deities are described as Bull; or else the last verse is an appendage as all such ill-fitting conclusions of Ṛgvedic hymns are. If this last reference to Indra is dropped or left out of consideration then the song in question is a usual philosophical mystic's song of the vision of the Sun. The reference to the two Sons of Heaven, Varuṇa and Mitra also would point to the solar import of the hymn and also the reference to the Gandharvas in 6 would corroborate such a conclusion for it is the Sun rather than Indra who is associated with the Gandharvas. It is to be noted that about Gandharvas GRIFFITH remarks 'here probably they are sunbeams.' To my mind the reference in 4,

> 'Even as he mounted up they all adorned him: self-luminous he travels clothed in splendour'

is as clear a reference to the Sun as could be. To understand here 'Indra as the Sun' is to create difficulties.

But perhaps I. 164 the song of Dīrghatamas Māmateya is equally if not more important from this point of view. The song is a longish one having as many as 53 ṛks. But it contains conclusions which may be regarded as the culmination of the Ṛgvedic philosophical thought. The poet here begins his quest of Reality much in the same manner as that of the poet of the Nāsadīya Sūkta, for he says;

> Unripe in mind, in spirit undiscerning, I ask of these the God's established places; 5.

and again

> I ask, unknowing, those who know, the sages, as one all ignorant for sake of knowledge,

What was that One who in the Unborn's image hath established and fixed firm these world's six regions. 6.

Let him who knoweth presently declare it, this lovely Bird's securely founded station. 7.

Who, that the father of this Calf discerneth beneath the Upper realm above the lower,

Showing himself a sage, may here declare it? Whence hath the Godlike spirit had its rising ? 18.

I ask thee of the earth's extremest limit, where is the centre of the world, I ask thee.

I ask thee of the Stallion's seed prolific, I ask of highest heaven where Speech abideth. 34.

or again

Who hath beheld him as he sprang to being, seen how the boneless One supports the bony ?

Where is the blood of earth, the life, the spirit ? Who may approach the man who knows, to ask it ? 4.

In this manner the poet expresses his eagerness for knowledge. He is trying to have a peep into the mystery of Universe, its Maker, and the Self that is within him. He says :

What thing I truly am I know not clearly ; mysterious, fettered in my mind I wander.

When the first-born of holy Law approached me, then of this speech I first obtained a portion. 37.

Then with different metaphors, those of Father and Mother, Cows, the Wheel of Time and the Seasons, he goes on to explain, the phenomenon of creation. What is of greater significance is that Dīrghatamas is looking into the future life of the Soul as well. RANADE has pointed out (p. 151) that 38 and 31 clearly refer to transmigration :

Back, forward goes he, grasped by strength inherent, the Immortal born the brother of the mortal.

Ceaseless they move in opposite directions : men mark the one and fail to mark the other. 38.

But what is perhaps of still greater importance and of relevance from our point of view is that he declares :

> I saw the Herdsman, him who never stumbles, approaching by his pathways and departing.
>
> He, clothed with gathered and diffusive splendour, within the worlds continually travels. 31.

OLDENBERG understands here, in these ṛks, a reference to the morning and the evening stars while GRIFFITH understands a reference to the Sun. Even granting that there are difficulties in giving a very consistent interpretation of the entire hymn yet one can be pretty certain of the fact that towards the close of the hymn, Dīrghatamas is speaking of the process of rebirth and has given material for the later Doctrine of the Five Fires, the Pañcāgnividyā :

> Uniform, with the passing days, this water mounts and falls again.
>
> The tempest-clouds give life to earth, and fires re-animate the heaven. 51.
>
> The Bird Celestial, vast with noble pinion, the lovely germ of the plants, the germ of waters,
>
> Him who delighteth us with rain in season, Sarasvan, I invoke that he may help us. 52.

With this may be compared the Chāndogya Upaniṣad V. 10.1.6.

'Thence they descend by this road : from the moon they come down to the sky, from the sky to the wind. Having become wind they become smoke, having become smoke they become mist; having become mist they become a cloud ; having become a cloud they rain down. Then they are born as either rice or barley, herbs or trees, sesamum or beans : at this stage the path is difficult to follow. Whoever eats the food or discharges the seed, like unto him do they become '.

Dīrghatamas describes his vision again :

> Two Birds with fair wings, knit with bonds of friendship, in the same sheltering tree have found a refuge.

One of the twain eats the sweet Fig-tree's fruitage ; the other eating not regardeth only. 20.

Where those fine Birds hymn ceaselessly their portion of life eternal and the sacred synods,

There is the Universe's mighty Keeper, who, wise, hath entered into me the simple. 21.

The Mythical World Tree and the Souls on it are thus described :

The tree whereon the fine Birds eat the sweetness where they all rest and procreate their offspring,—

Upon its top they say the fig is luscious : none gaineth it who knoweth not the Father. 22.

It is true that the Suparṇas, the two Birds, have been variously explained as 'two species of souls; day and night Sun and Moon; rays of light; stars; metres; spirits of the dead and priests'; but considering the significance that the concept has in the Upaniṣads, as well as the fact that the Ṛgveda frequently uses the words 'the Bird, the Horse' etc. to represent the Sun and also the fact that on the burial jars discovered at Harappa, a Bird is shown as drawing something after it, it becomes clear and so one is tempted to conclude that the Bird stands here for the Sun and the Soul. The tree also has been variously taken as 'the body ; orb or region of the Sun ; the sacrificial post:; the world and the mythical World-tree'. Sāyaṇācārya says that the two birds are the vital and the Supreme Spirit dwelling in one body. The vital spirit enjoys the fruit or rewards of actions while the Supreme Spirit is merely a passive spectator.

Sāyaṇācārya in his commentary on this hymn has given throughout a philosophical interpretation and appears to treat the poem as the vision of Dīrghatamas. Thus he prefaces the poem as follows in his comments on the first ṛk :

'Apaśyam sākṣātkaromi ... sṛṣṭyādikāraṇam parameśvaram jñeyatvena prasiddham sravaṇamananādisādhanena sākṣātkaromi, iti arthaḥ/evam uttaratra api adhyātmaparatayā yojayitum śakyam/tathāpi svarasatvabhāvāt granthavistarabhayāt ca na likhyate'/

on I. 164. 1.

Dīrghatamas had the vision of the Self and the Highest, of the Tree, of the Soul's journey after death but the most important truth that he has seen and given out is given in ṛk 46.

> They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, and he is heavenly nobly-winged Garutman.
>
> To what is One, sages give many a title : they call it Agni, Yama and Mātariśvan.

This is the conclusion taken up as the very basis of all philosophical thought by later Indian thinkers. It would be no exaggeration to say that all later Advaitic thought i nothing but an amplification of this vision of Dīrghatamas. What is further significant is that the poet has proceeded along the two paths of Mysticism, the internal as well as the external, the first leading to the perception of the Self and the latter leading to the Unifying Vision. Indeed, Dīrghatamas lays down the foundation of the Vedānta Philosophy for in clear terms he asserts the importance of Knowledge :

> They told me these were males, though truly females: he who hath eyes sees this, the blind discerns not. The son who is a sage hath comprehended: who knows this rightly is his father's father. 16.

It is impossible not to think of the later story of Śiśu Āṅgirasa in this context.

We have discussed in some details this vision of Dīrghatamas, the blind poet, because of its importance and also because of the fact that he is an outstanding mystic of the Ṛgvedic age. That this song gives us his vision should be clear since in the song itself he asserts thrice that he has 'seen' what he is speaking out. Thus he observes in 1. '*Apaśyam viśpatim saptaputram*', in 16 '*paśyat akṣaṇvān na vi cetat andhaḥ*, in 31 '*Apaśyam gopām*' and in 26 observes:

> May Savitar give goodliest stimulation. The caldron is made hot ; I will proclaim it.

Further, what is also more interesting is that in his vision he appears to have seen the phenomena of Storm and Lightning (29) and Smoke (43), Forms which are first manifesta-

tions of the Highest, to a Mystic, as the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad informs us. Importance of the holy syllable Om, terminology like 'Kṣara, Akṣara, Bhuvanasya Gopā' are to be reckoned as his contribution to philosophical thought. Like a true mystic Dīrghatamas draws a contrast between learning and wisdom :

> Upon what syllable of holy praise-song, as it were their highest heaven, the Gods repose them —
>
> Who knows not this, what will he do with praise-song ? But those who know it well sit here assembled. 39.

Once we grasp these essentials of the Ṛgvedic mystic thought, the supreme importance of the Sun, the Time, the phenomena of Rain and of Lightning, the Suparṇa and the Cow, it becomes very easy to appreciate the mystic thought of the Atharvaveda. We find the following hymns Time, IX.53; Rohita, the Sun XIII.3; Ox IX.4; Cow X.10 in the Atharvaveda are closely modelled on the Ṛgvedic material. All this philosophical and mystical material of the Atharvaveda has been studied by LUCIAN SCHERMAN, F. EDGERTON, DEUSSEN and WINTERNITZ. As usual these scholars are not at all unanimous in their estimation of the value of these songs. One might quote from WINTERNITZ : 'However, if we look more closely at these hymns we shall soon find that they like the magic songs, mostly serve only practical purposes. It is not the yearning and searching for truth, for the solution of dark riddles of the universe, which inspires the authors of these hymns, but they, too are only conjurers who pose as philosophers, by misusing the well known philosophical expressions in an ingenious, or rather artificial web of foolish and non-sensical plays of fancy, in order to create an impression of the mystical, the mysterious.' He further condemns these verses as 'empty mystery mongering'. The material that these songs utilise only proves that the chief ideas of the Upaniṣads and the philosophical terms like 'brahman, tapas, asat, prāṇa, manas had become almost a common property of large circles. It is the thought of the Ṛgveda that is further developed in the Upaniṣads and the Atharvaveda material does not represent a transition-step in this development.

DEUSSEN is more sympathetic and after a critical study of these hymns remarks that 'they stand not so much inside the great course of development, as rather by its side'. WINTERNITZ by comparing Ṛgveda X.121 with Atharvaveda X.2. tries to show that the latter is a sheer imitation and thinks that it is to honour these songs too much by seeking deep wisdom in them. And yet even WINTERNITZ could not help remarking about XII.1. the Hymn to Earth that it is a magnificient hymn. From all this discussion it would be clear that the Atharvavedic mysticism is an imitation of the Ṛgvedic mysticism. In literature and religion cults often arise and soon have their own conventions in ideas and terminology as well. A critical study of repetitions from the Ṛgveda as collected by BLOOMFIELD shows very clearly that even the poets of the Ṛgveda are working with a poetical language, expression and diction pretty fixed. The same phenomenon is seen about the mystical poetry of the two Vedas. Later on, the Epic Poetry also reveals a similar phenomenon. Therefore, one really need not be surprised at the repetitions at which WINTERNITZ seems to have lost patience. His main conclusion, however, that the Atharvaveda mystical poetry has very little to match with the mystical poetry of the Ṛgveda can be accepted. When everything is said that can be said for and against this type of mystical poetry as is to be seen in the early Aryan compositions, one can say that these are remarkable and profound utterances and the sublimity and the grandeur of the song of Dirghatamas have something incomparable about them. It is impossible to forget his

'Dyaus is my father, my begetter : kinship is here.
This great Earth is my kin and Mother'. 33

a vision which has Wordsworthian intensity and sublimity and which reveals an 'enjoying soul' like Traherne's.

CHAPTER FOUR

NATURE MYSTICS

It is customary with Vedic scholars to speak of the Rgvedic religion as a religion in which the various powers of Nature have been personified and worshipped as Deities. ARNOLD while speaking of the various stages of the Vedic Religion observes that there is a stage in it, what may be called the Indo-European Nature Worship. In a similar manner BLOOMFIELD while classifying the Vedic Gods puts them in the different classes as 'transparent or opaque' according to the degree of clarity in which the phenomenon of Nature which they represent is to be seen in them. MACDONELL remarks, 'To this oldest phase can be traced by uninterrupted development the germs of the religious belief of the great majority of the modern Indians, the only branch of the Indo-European race in which its original nature worship has not been entirely supplanted many centuries ago by a foreign monotheistic faith. The Vedic mythology is not so primitive as was one time supposed but is primitive enough so as to allow us to see the process of personification by which natural phenomena developed into Gods, a process not apparent in other literatures'. He further observes 'The foundation on which Vedic mythology rests, is still the belief surviving from a remote antiquity, that all the objects and phenomena of nature with which man is surrounded, are animate and divine. Everything that impressed the soul with awe or was regarded as capable of exercising a good or bad influence on man, might in Vedic age still become a direct object not only of adoration but of prayer. Heaven, earth, mountains, rivers, plants might be supplicated as divine powers; the horse, the cow, the bird of omen and other animals might be invoked; even objects fashioned by the hand of man, weapons, the war-car, the drum, the plough, as well as ritual implements, such as the pressing-stones and the sacrificial post, might be adored.' (p. 2).

All this is true no doubt and we do see the powers of nature being slowly shrouded in myths and poetry so much so that

ultimately the very phenomenon serving as the basis of this superstructure becomes not only invisible but hard to discover. In certain cases the veil would be thin and our task may be easy yet cases are not wanting in which it is almost impossible to make any guess or where so many possibilities present themselves so that one is simply bewildered and cannot come to a conclusion. A glance at the discussions of the Vedic scholars regarding the precise natural phenomena behind Indra, Varuṇa, Aśvinau would bear out these remarks with ample evidence. Just as there are these grades and degrees in Personification, there is also, I would like to point out, a very subtle difference in the urge for this Personification in the different cases. MACDONELL and others sharing his views would appear to hold that the primitive Vedic Indian was conscious of presence of 'Mana' in these things. Those who approve of the 'animistic theory' would hold that 'in virtue of the attribution to natural objects of a soul or spirit they came to be regarded as objects of worship. MARETT would say that 'Animatism' is responsible for this worship for "the savage feels religiously towards some natural object because it impresses him somehow as alive, as instinct with active force". Professor MENZIES would point out that 'The farther we go back in civilization the less protection has man against the weather, the more do his subsistence and his comfort depend on the action of the sun, the winds, the rain'. It is thus, then through agriculture that man comes in close and continuous contact with nature and its processes and these naturally awake in him a sense of dependence on a Power greater than himself. In primitive life food occupies a central position and hence it must have played its own part. Lastly there is the little accepted theory of SPENCER that 'the deified ancestor is the original type to which every species of godhead is to be traced back'. As PRINGLE-PATTISON has pointed out 'Nature-worship finds its objects either in the great powers of nature, the most impressive and universal phenomena, such as Heaven or the sky, the sun, the moon, the dawn, the sunset, and the phenomena of the weather, rain, storm, thunder, and lightning, or in minor and local objects such as the spring or the river on which life depends.' This is essentially true of the Nature

worship in the Ṛgveda. But what I would like to point out is that even admitting all these elements in the Vedic Nature Religion, one has to say that they, the Vedic Indians have left the primitive stage far behind. I would call the different urges of the Vedic Indians revealed in the process of Personification as the Moral, the Aesthetic, and the third as the Ritualistic. This last is to be seen in action in the songs addressed to the ritual implements, the Grāvan, the Yūpa and the like. This very type of urge is to be seen where the other gods are called as 'Priests' or praised in terms connected with the Sacrifice and its ritual. The other two urges, the Moral and the Aesthetic are to be seen in operation in such cases as the Uṣas, the Savitṛ, Heaven, Earth, Rivers, Waters, the Parjanya, the Maruts and the like. If the songs addressed to these gods are critically studied, then one is not inclined to subscribe, as already observed, to the widely held view that the Ṛgveda reveals the phenomenon of Nature Worship as a primitive stage in the development of the Vedic thought. There is a good deal of very significant difference between the two cases : a primitive man regarding a stone as magical or powerful because of its peculiar shape, or because of its uniqueness and the Vedic Indian worshipping the Grāvan. Secondly, almost as a general rule, the songs addressed to these Deities increase in number as well as in moral and poetical fervour as we come from the Middle Books to the Later Books. This only means that Nature Worship did continue as before and ultimately all these urges coalesced into the Brahman Worship of the later times. The ritualistic thought gave them the conception of Order, Law, Delight and of a metaphysical source behind all things. It is when these different currents coalesced into one another that we have the grand and sublime conception of the '*nitya-śuddha buddha-mukta*' and '*ānanda*' Brahman. Thus into the development of the Brahman Mysticism of the Upaniṣadic period, there is much that is to be traced back to the Nature Songs of the Ṛgveda. In other words, to the Mysticism of the later times, the Nature Mystics of the Ṛgvedic age have made as much contribution as the Philosophical and the Ritualistic mystics have done.

Could we call these Nature poets of the Ṛgvedic times as Mystics in any sense of the term? Or are MACDONELL and others right and nearer the mark when they see in these songs the primitive Nature Religion of the Indo-Europeans? It is to be remembered that primitive character of a religion does not preclude the possibility of the presence and development of Mysticism in it. It should be readily conceded that these poets could be deservedly called mystics if they reveal in their songs, that through the particular phenomenon of Nature they have a glimpse of the Highest, of Something Beyond, and also if they reveal that these phenomena of Nature have an influence on their life, sublime and holy and that they were very much anxious to live in harmony with this Nature and further that this constitutes happiness. Mysticism is an attitude and if this attitude is present in these songs then we have Nature Mysticism here. It will be seen that the Vedic poets do not simply worship the phenomena of Nature because these supply food and fulfil the needs or have good or bad influence on their life but they adore these because they are struck by their beauty, majesty and have analysed with much introspection the effect of this beauty and majesty on their own perceiving minds. To them, these phenomena, Uṣas, Parjanya, Maruts etc. are not merely impressive facts of Nature but these are children of Immortality. Watching these, they become conscious of the fact that they are 'examples of the same law which operates through all that God had made.' These 'convey and illumine' the principles of God, the Ṛta. One could describe this religion as symbolism for to these poets these natural phenomena 'are vital expressions and natural vehicles of the Divine'. While speaking about Wordsworth's mysticism E. HERMAN observes 'his fundamental doctrine is that God speaks not in Nature only, nor in the human soul only, but in both; and that it is to the soul in the act of communion with Nature that the deepest revelations are vouchsafed. Such revelations are the fruit of the marriage of the intellect of men (including the imagination which is Reason in her most exalted mood) to this "goodly universe, in love and holy passion". These revelations convey at once a sense of that infinitude and eternity which are our home and a sense of the depth of the hidden self–the twin fruit of mystic introversion'.

(p. 213–214). These remarks are applicable to these Vedic poets as well.

Thus Medhātithi Kāṇva sings: I.23.

> I call the Waters, Goddesses, wherein our cattle quench their thirst: Oblations to the streams be given. 18.
>
> Amṛta is in the Waters; in the Waters there is healing balm. 19.

And so on. He is struck by the beauty of 'many coloured grass'–*citra barhi*. He describes the Maruts as 'born of the laughing lightning'. Though the song is a general invitation to the Gods, yet the delight in pastoral life is evident in it. The ethical tone can be felt in

> Whatever sin is found in me, whatever evil I have wrought,
>
> If I have lied or falsely sworn, Waters, remove it far from me. 22.

This is how Gṛtsamada describes the phenomenon of Lightning: II.35.

> Golden in form is he, like gold to look on, his colour is like gold, the Son of Waters.
>
> When he is seated fresh from golden birth-place those who present their gold give food to feed him. 10.

He is law-abiding, everlasting and never-sullen youthful Maidens, Waters decking themselves wait on him, the youthful. The poet finishes with a sublime assurance in

> 'Blessed is all that Gods regard with favour'. 15.

Vasiṣṭha addresses the Waters in a rather quiet manner in VII. 47 and 49.

> All-purifying, joying in their nature, to paths of Gods the Goddesses move onward.
>
> They never violate the laws of Indra. Present the oil-rich offering to the Rivers. 47.3.
>
> Whom Sūrya with his bright beams has attracted, and Indra dug the path for them to travel,

May these streams give us ample room and freedom.47.4.

These Waters are bright, purifying, speeding to the Ocean, amid them goes Varuṇa discriminating men's truth and falsehood and are never-sleeping. 49.3.

Equally interesting is the celebrated III.33. which gives us the dialogue between Viśvāmitra and the two Rivers, Vipāś and Śutudri. There is nothing to compare with

Forth from the bosom of the mountains, eager as two swift mares with loosened rein contending,

Like two bright mother cows who lick their youngling, Vipāś and Śutudri speed down their waters. 1.

True, like Mothers the Rivers responded to the call of the poet. The poet makes the Rivers speak, thus investing them with feeling, a love for mankind and also a sense of duty.

Here is almost in a Wordsworthian manner Kuśika Saubhara addressing the Night. X. 127.

With all her eyes the Goddess Night looks forth approaching many a spot : She hath put all her glories on.

Immortal, she hath filled the waste, the Goddess hath filled height and depth : She conquers darkness with her light.2.

The villagers have sought their homes and all that walks and all that flies, Even the falcons fain for prey.5

The poet has to ask of this Lady Night '*athā naḥ sutarā bhava*'.

Vāmadeva in IV.57. approaches the Kṣetrapati for a happy and successful agricultural season. But if these are rather the quiet aspects of Nature, we can turn to the more attractive and picturesque aspects as well. This is how Bhauma Atri sings of the Parjanya : V.83.

He smites the trees apart, he slays the demons : all life fears him who wields the mighty weapon,

From him exceeding strong flees even the guiltless, when thundering Parjanya smites the wicked. 2.

Like a car-driver whipping on his horses, he makes the messengers of rain spring forward.

Far off resounds the roaring of the lion, what time Parjanya fills the sky with rain-cloud. 3.

But the poet is conscious of the fact that the Parjanya while playing havoc has also the seeds of germination in him. The winds burst forth, down come the lightning flashes : the plants shoot up, the realm of light streams, yet the poet asks of him 'Thunder and roar : the germ of life deposit'. He thanks him for having made 'the deserts fit to travel and made herbs to grow for enjoyment'. The poet appears to describe the Parjanya as 'the Destroyer and Preserver' and indeed the song could be looked upon as an Ode to Parjanya. Vasiṣṭha also in VII. 101 and 102 sings of the Parjanya in a similar manner.

He is the Bull of all, and their impregner: he holds the life of all things fixed and moving. 101. 6.

Parjanya is the God who forms in kine, in mares, in plants of earth,

And womankind, the germ of life. 102.2.

In a mystical manner Vasiṣṭha describes the eternal wheel of productive activity :

Now he is sterile, now begetteth offspring, even as he willeth doth he change his figure.

The Father's genial flow bedews the Mother; therewith the Sire, therewith the son is nourished. 101. 3.

Of exquisite nature and having the mark of Yeats's simplicity as well as profundity is the following song of Devamuni, son of Irammada addressed to the Deity of the Forest : X.146.

Goddess of wild and forest who seemest to vanish from the sight,

How is it that thou seekest not the village? Art thou not afraid? 1.

What time the grasshopper replies and swells the shrill cicala's voice,

Seeming to sound with tinkling bells, the Lady of the Wood exults. 2.

And, yonder, cattle seem to graze, what seems a dwelling-place appears :

Or else at eve the Lady of the Forest seems to free the wains. 3.

Here one is calling to his cow, another there hath felled a tree :

At eve the dweller in the wood fancies that somebody hath screamed. 4.

The Goddess never slays, unless some murderous enemy approach.

Man eats of savoury fruit and then takes, even as he wills, his rest. 5.

Now have I praised the Forest Queen, sweet-scented, redolent of balm,

The Mother of all sylvan things, who tills not but hath stores of food. 6.

The mood, the quiet and the simplicity are simply inimitable. Thus has Nature been perceived by these poets. One is tempted to add that the translator has not added anything to the original ; it would have been indeed painting the lily.

The Vedic poets have been very much impressed by the phenomenon of the Sun-rise. They have analysed the psychological effects of this glorious hour on the human mind. Indeed, it may be asserted without being guilty of any exaggeration that no other phenomenon of Nature except that of the Dawn perhaps, has impressed the Ṛgvedic mind to the extent to which this solar phenomenon has done. They felt the flood of light and so conceived Sūrya, the Lord of Light. They knew the wonderful stimulation that they received at his appearance and so they conceived of Savitṛ, the Lord of Energy. They saw their paths illumined, leading to happier homes and richer pastures and so they conceived of Pūṣan, the Nourisher and the Guardian of the paths. They have been impressed with the beauty and majesty of this phenomenon so much that they have made him pre-eminently Golden. For once in the cases of the Sun and the Dawn, PRINGLE-PATTISON'S remarks "As

regards nature-worship in the larger sense, we are apt, perhaps to read too much of our own feelings into the motives of the primitive worshipper, to picture him as falling down in adoration, prompted solely by the beauty and the majesty of the spectacle perpetually unrolling itself before him. Since we are dealing with our own human ancestors we need not suppose that the aesthetic emotions were entirely inoperative ; but we must remember that throughout the history of religion, worship is prompted by human needs" do not fully hold good. For worship may be as he puts it 'an expression of a desire to put oneself in relation with higher powers and to bespeak their aid' yet the songs to Savitṛ and the Uṣas are something much more than an expression of a desire as he describes (p. 68). This is how Hiraṇyastūpa sings of the glories of the Sun-rise. I.35.

> Throughout the dusky firmament advancing, laying to rest the immortal and the mortal,
>
> Borne in his golden chariot he cometh, Savitṛ, God who looks on every creature. 2.
>
> His chariot decked with pearl, of various colours, lofty, with golden pole, the God hath mounted,
>
> The many-rayed One, Savitṛ the holy, bound, bearing power and might, for darksome regions. 4.

Here is another poet Praskaṇva describing this very phenomenon in a simple yet forceful manner. I.50 ;

> The constellations pass away, like thieves, together with their beams, before the all-beholding Sun. 2.
>
> His herald rays are seen afar refulgent over the world of men,
>
> Like flames of fire that burn and blaze. 3.
>
> Swift and all beautiful art thou, O Sūrya, maker of the light,
>
> Illumining all the radiant realm. 4.

Equally beautiful is his expression '*Śociṣkeśa*'–of radiant hair–but of greater importance is his utterance that

Looking upon the loftier light above the darkness we have come
To Sūrya, God among the Gods, the light that is most excellent. 10.

In later Indian Philosophy this cry for light—*jyotis*—gains a spiritual significance and it is clear that Praskaṇva also has a similar lofty feeling in his mind. While reading these songs to Sūrya, of these Ṛgvedic poets it is impossible not to remember William Blake's "What" it will be questioned, "when the sun rises, do you not see a round disc of fire, somewhat like a guinea?" "Oh! no, no!" I see an innumerable company of the heavenly host, crying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty!' I question not my corporeal eye, any more than I would question a window concerning a sight. I look through it, and not with it". Like Wordsworth these Ṛgvedic poets seem to have possessed 'the eye made quiet by the power of harmony and the deep power of joy'. They seem to have achieved 'that wise passiveness and fruitful equilibrium in which the soul sees into the life of things'. In their songs addressed to Uṣas also they reveal this mysticism of theirs in an unmistakable manner. No doubt that they are impressed by the majesty and serenity of the phenomenon of the Dawn but in that beauty, in that recurring phenomenon they have perceived something holy, they do have a glimpse of something deeper and Divine. The approach is at once both, sensuous and sublime. Thus Gotama sings of the Uṣas. : I.92.

Ancient of days, again and again born newly, decking her beauty with the self-same raiment,
The Goddess wastes away the life of mortals, like a skilled hunter cutting birds in pieces. 10.
She hath appeared discovering heaven's borders: to the far distance she drives off her Sister.
Diminishing the days of human creatures, the Lady shines with all her lover's splendour. 11.
The bright, the blessed One shines forth extending her rays like kine, as a flood rolls his waters.
Never transgressing the divine commandments, she is beheld visible with the sun-beams. 12.

This is how Viśvāmitra regards her : III.61.

> Thou, Morning, turning thee to every creature, standest on high as ensign of the Immortal,
> To one same goal ever and ever wending: now like a wheel, O newly born, roll hither. 3.

Vāmadeva is also much impressed by the Dawns and to him they are ' true with truth that springs from holy Order– *Ṛtajātasatyāḥ*. He asks : IV.51.

> Which among these is eldest, and where is she through whom they fixed the Ṛbhus' regulations?
> What time the splendid Dawns go forth for splendour, they are not known apart, alike, unwasting. 6.

One may refer to the song of Kakṣīvat Dīrghatamas I.124. for similar sentiments and also to I.113, the song of Kutsa Āṅgiras. These Vedic poets, children of Nature as they were, did regard Nature as their gracious Mother. Every phenomenon appeared to their contemplative minds as a symbol of Immortal Divinity, Untransgressable Order. The spirit to be seen is the same which we see in Nature Mystics. It would be only proper to close this section on the Nature Mystics by a reference to Dīrghatamas, the poet of I.159. and 160 and also to Agastya the poet of I.185, poets who in their sweet and simple songs invoke Heaven and Earth, the Father and Mother. Standing between these two our mighty and vast parents—parents of Humanity—it is impossible to escape the thoughts which these poets express. They know that these Parents have Gods for their progeny, '*Devaputre*', and that they are strengtheners of Law '*Ṛtavṛdha*'; that the Father has a gracious mind and the Mother has great inherent power. We are told in I.160.

> Widely-capacious Pair, mighty, that never fail, the Father and the Mother keep all creatures safe :
> The two world-halves, the spirited, the beautiful, because the Father hath clothed them in goodly forms. 2.

With a child's inquisitiveness yet with a philosopher's insight the poet Agastya asks : I.185.

Whether of these is elder, whether later? How were they born?

Who knoweth it, ye sages?

Those of themselves support all things existing: as on a car the Day and Night roll onward. 1.

The Twain uphold, though motionless and footless, a wide-spread offspring having feet and moving.

Like your own son upon his parents' bosom, protect us, Heaven and Earth from fearful danger. 2.

I call for Aditi's unrivalled bounty, perfect, celestial deathless, meet for worship.

Produce this, ye Twain Worlds, for him who lauds you. Protect us, Heaven and Earth from fearful danger. 3.

May we be close to both the Worlds who suffer no pain, Parents of Gods, who aid with favour.

Both mid the Gods, with Day and Night alternate. Protect us, Heaven and Earth, from fearful danger. 4.

Fairing together, young, with meeting limits, Twin Sisters lying in their Parents' bosom,

Kissing the centre of the world together. Protect us, Heaven and Earth, from fearful danger. 5.

Duly I call the two wide seats, the mighty, the general Parents, with the Gods' protection.

Who, beautiful to look on, make the nectar. Protect us, Heaven and Earth, from fearful danger. 6.

Wide, vast, and manifold, whose bounds are distant,- these, reverent, I address at this our worship,

The blessed Pair, victorious, all-sustaining. Protect us, Heaven and Earth, from fearful danger. 7.

What sin we have at any time committed against the Gods, our friend, our house's chieftain,

Thereof may this our hymn be expiation. Protect us, Heaven and Earth, from fearful danger. 8.

May both these Friends of man, who bless, preserve me, may they attend me with their help and favour.

Enrich the man more liberal than the godless. May we, ye Gods, be strong with food rejoicing. 9.

Endowed with understanding, I have uttered this truth, for all to hear, to Earth and Heaven.

Be near us, keep us from reproach and trouble. Father and Mother, with your help preserve us. 10.

Be this my prayer fulfilled, O Earth and Heaven, wherewith, Father and Mother, I address you.

Nearest of Gods be ye with your protection. May we fiind strengthening food in full abundance. 11.

One may feel that here is no vision, no philosophy but it remains a sincere expression of a vivid sensation, feeling and aspiration. No doubt that such a feeling can only be expressed in such general terms yet the emotion is powerful enough to attract us, for 'the certainty and rapture of this experience of spiritual emotion' is simply amazing. LOTZE is of the view that 'no Nature religions have raised their adherents to any high pitch of morality and culture' and FATHER TYRREL appears to support him when he observes that 'the conception of Nature as being, apart from man, a direct expression or self-manifestation, of the Divine character, is responsible for the moral and spiritual perversions that are everywhere associated with polytheistic or pantheistic Nature worship. To worship the carricature, of Divinity there revealed to us is really to worship the devil'. (p. 233. *Meaning and Value of Mysticism*). After reading these songs of the Ṛgvedic poets and also after having watched their development into the Upaniṣadic thought one would certainly at least think twice before subscribing wholeheartedly to these views. It is in these early songs of the Ṛgvedic Nature Mystics that lies the origin of the later observations of the Upaniṣadic period that

"Contemplation is superior to consciousness. The earth seems to contemplate, the waters seem to contemplate, the mountains seem to contemplate".

Chāndogya Upaniṣad. VII.6.1.

or

"So this is what the divine voice speaks da, da, da, i. e. practise self-control, charity and kindness",

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, V.2.3.

or

"By the command of that Akṣara, O Gargi, some rivers flow to the East etc".

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, III.8.9.

or

"The Universe is a huge chest with the earth as its bottom and the heavens as its upper lid, the sky as its inside and the quarters as its corners, containing in its inside a rich treasure".

Chāndogya Upaniṣad III.15.1.

hence their importance cannot be overstated.

CHAPTER FIVE

LOVE AND BEAUTY MYSTICS

OLDENBERG would have almost flown into a rage possibly at any student of the Ṛgveda making himself bold enough to assert that among the Ṛgvedic poets there are some who could be regarded as Love and Beauty Mystics. His estimate of the Ṛgvedic poetry is very low, especially from the point of view of Aesthetics and he expresses himself as :

"This oldest document of Indian religion and literature shows a very clear trace of an ever-increasing intellectual enervation. These songs are the sacrificial litanies with which the barbarian priests invoked their barbarian gods to feast on the sacrificial cake. The singers of the Ṛgveda in the manner of old go on composing songs for the great and pompous Soma sacrifice, and without telling of the god they worship, simply shower on him all the glorifying epithets at the disposal of the grossly flattering garrulousness of an imagination that loves the bright and the garish. Such poetry could have arisen only in the exclusive circles of the priestly sacrificial experts." HILLEBRANDT would seem to endorse this view when he observes that these songs have arisen in certain singer families, in narrow priestly circles, and that in them one feels the absence of the poetic awe and grandeur at the vision of the Divine. With such an estimate of the quality of the Ṛgvedic poetry, it would be unnatural to expect any support from these quarters for a view which would credit the Ṛgvedic poets with a sublime perception of Beauty. It is noteworthy, however, that OLDENBERG felt himself called upon to examine this question and therefore carried out an enquiry in his own usual thorough manner. It would be interesting to note his observations in this connection. The following words constitute the Ṛgvedic vocabulary with reference to the concept of Beauty. "*Psaras, Peśas, Apsas, Dṛś, Śrī, Vapuṣ, Valgu, Śriyas, Bhadra, Bhaṇḍa, Cāru, Priya, Rūpa, Kalyāṇa, Subh, Citra Darśata, Svādu, Raṇva, Vāma, Yakṣa and Adbhuta.*" PISCHEL has studied (Vedische Studien. I. 308–318; II. 113–125; III. 195–198.)

the words Apsas, Peśas and Psāras with a view to evaluating the concept of Beauty in the Ṛgveda. OLDENBERG has subjected these words to a critical examination in his essay 'Vedic words for Beautiful and Beauty and the Vedic sense of the Beautiful'. His conclusions can be briefly summarised as under :

"Dṛś and Śrī refer to that which is pleasing to the view. S'riyas rests upon the body. Bhadra means bearing happiness, and it represents an object or person whose sight brings gladness or joy. It is 'pleasing possession'. Bhaṇḍa is closely associated with Bhadra, Cāru stands besides Priya, and means delightful, lovable. Bhadra means that which bestows happiness, while Cāru is that which is pleasing or that which creates a sensation of pleasure. Thus Cāru refers also to the beauty of appearance. Kalyāṇa refers to the personal beauty of human or divine beings. Śubh gives the idea of self-adornment, finery and display. It is an external attribute of the being. Vapuṣ describes the brilliant, beautiful sights. There is the conception of wonder around this word as can be seen from its association with Cāru and Darśata. Valgu denotes the springing or undulating motion in joy, and hence it brings forth the skilful, felicitous movement. Darśata, Rūpa and Svādu also refer to the physical perception. Raṇva denotes the beautiful, something which is filled with well-being, satisfaction or which is connected with it. It can also refer to the subject who experiences this state of mind. Vāma describes those things in the attainment of which one rejoices or would wish to rejoice. Citra also belongs to the realm of perception, though there is an inkling of the inner spiritual perception."

About the Ṛgvedic concept of Beauty OLDENBERG has to say as follows :

"Life and beauty of the human form did not as yet appeal to the poets of the Ṛgveda. They feel a kind of admiring joy in the beauty of nature. They appear to have seen the beauty of force and greatness of swift motion; of light, of the milder charms of the dawn, of the victorious strength of the rays of the sun and the fire. They realized beauty in human

form and in the appearance of the Gods that resembled the human beings, in nature, in the works of human skill, above all in poetry his own production. They are no doubt fond of rich adornment. Yet it is clear that there does not occur a word which can be taken as denoting physical beauty in an unmistakable manner. The conception of Beauty in Ṛgvedic times is not very great, since Beautiful is rarely placed on a par with the universal forces. The prefix 'Su' in the words like 'Supeśas' only denotes a very ancient expression of estimation of values in which there is as yet no distinction between the practical, aesthetic and moral appreciations. The Ṛgvedic concept of Beauty is not an unmixed pure one, but is to a very great extent coupled with the practical and moral values. They appear to have no clear conception of Beauty, but only a hazy one where the senses enjoy a prominent place. The Beauty of which the Vedic poet dreamt evidently contained a strong admixture of brilliance, pomp and ornamentation, possessions and wealth not excluded."

MR. P. S. SASTRI has examined the whole question again afresh and has come to exactly opposite conclusions in his essay 'The Ṛgvedic Philosophy of the Beautiful' (A. B. O. R. I. Vol. XXXII, pp. 84-121). He has with much critical study tried to show as to how all these words have an unmistakable reference to Beauty and also do convey all the finer suggestions invariably associated with the concept of Beauty, such as sublimity, wonder, awe, reverence, its relation with the Reality and its spiritual aspect etc. One cannot but agree with the conclusions of Mr. SASTRI for the Vedic poets have really been conscious of Beauty, even in its most subtle aspect. They have seen and realized that ornaments decorate a person, dress is a decoration, feminine body has its own Beauty but all these perceptions are, to my mind, very natural to a human mind. We have already seen that they have been alive even to the finer beauties of Nature, and therefore, we need not be surprised when the Ṛgvedic poets speak of a 'thought beautiful on account of its purity–śucipeśas dhī,' or of a Deity as Beautiful on account of its connection with Ṛta–Ṛtapeśas. That this Beauty is also intimately related to

human life and appears in the form of bonds of Love and Attachment is also perfectly understood by these Ṛgvedic poets can be very well seen from X.32.3.

> More beautiful than beauty must this seem to me,
> when the son duly careth for his parents' line.
> The wife attracts the husband: with a shout of joy the
> man's auspicious marriage is performed aright. 3.

Kavaṣa Ailūṣa has perceived Beauty in Life and Marriage. The Sūryā Sūkta X. 85 may also be referred to for such lofty notions regarding wedded life. It is therefore quite in the fitness of things that we should speak of Beauty and Love Mystics of the Ṛgvedic period. They had realized Reality even through this very subtle yet most significant gate to Wisdom.

To my mind it appears that the Ṛgvedic concept of Beauty progressed and developed in three stages. As poets they saw the Beauty of form human as well as divine. This I would call the first stage. Then the second stage would be the perception of the inner Beauty, the Beauty of Thought and Mind, constituting a development over the first stage which is the perception of external Beauty. The third and the final stage would be a somewhat vague personification of Beauty as well as of the human self with its keen desire to grasp it and possess it. Here is how Kakṣīvat, the son of Dīrghatamas, perceives the Dawn : I.123.

> She who hath knowledge of the first day's nature is
> born refulgent white from out the darkness.
> The Maiden breaketh not the law of Order, day by day
> coming to the place appointed. 9.
> In pride of beauty like a maid thou goest, O Goddess,
> to the God who longs to win thee,
> And smiling, youthful, as thou shinest brightly, before
> him thou discoverest thy bosom. 10.
> Fair as a bride embellished by her mother thou showest
> forth thy form that all may see it.
> Blessed art thou, O Dawn. Shine yet more widely. No
> other Dawns have reached what thou attainest. 11.

Here at I. 124 again, the same poet perceives the Dawn as

Near is she seen, as it were the Bright One's bosom : she showeth sweet things like a new song-singer.

She cometh like a fly awaking sleepers, of all returning dames most true and constant. 4.

There in the east half of the watery region the Mother of the Cows hath shown her ensign.

Wider and wider still she spreadeth onward, and filleth full the laps of both her Parents. 5.

She, verily, exceeding vast to look on debarreth from her light nor kin nor stranger.

Proud of her spotless form she, brightly shining, turneth not from the high nor from the humble. 6.

She seeketh men as she who hath no brother, mounting her car, as it were to gather riches.

Dawn, like a loving matron for her husband, smiling and well attired, unmasks her beauty. 7.

The Sister quitteth, for the elder Sister, her place and having looked on her departeth.

She decks her beauty, shining forth with sun-beams, like women trooping to the festal meeting. 8.

But this is not mere aesthetic or sensuous perception of Beauty for the Ṛgvedic poet is aware that this Dawn is, supervising the ways of men, as Vasiṣṭha tells us in VII.75.4.

She yokes her chariot far away, and swiftly visits the lands where the Five Tribes are settled,

Looking upon the works and ways of mortals, Daughter of Heaven, the World's Imperial Lady.

If this is the perception of feminine Beauty, this is how Agastya perceives the manlike Beauty of the Maruts : I.166.

Held in your manly arms are many goodly things, gold chains are on your chests, and glistering ornaments.

Deer-skins are on their shoulders, on their fellies knives : they spread their glory out as birds spread out their wings. 10.

Mighty in mightiness, pervading, passing strong, visible from afar as it were with the stars of heaven,
Lovely with pleasant tongues, sweet singers with their mouths, the Maruts, joined with Indra, shout forth all around. 11.

Vasiṣṭha VII·56 perceives them as

By Law they come to truth, the Law's observers, bright by their birth, and pure and sanctifying. 12.
Your rings, O Maruts, rest upon your shoulders, and chains of gold are twined upon your bosoms.
Gleaning with drops of rain, like lightning-flashes, after your wont ye whirl about your weapons. 13.

This certainly is not what OLDENBERG calls 'love of the bright and the garish'. The very vivid character of the Forms perceived, the arresting details, the superb aesthetic approach and lastly the invariably present consciousness of the relation of the phenomenon with Law and Order as well as Immortality leave no doubt about the fact that these poets have a very sublime conception of Beauty. It is in a similar strain that they perceive the beauty of Agni, Varuṇa and other Gods; but almost every time they associate it with Immortality, Holy Nature, Order and Law, *Ṛta*. The male as well as the female form and its beauty has been very vividly perceived by them and it would not be an exaggeration to say that in this perception of Beauty of Form and through it of the Sublime, they have anticipated the ancient Greeks. This perception of the Beauty of Form, human and divine, may be taken as natural and so I have regarded it as the first stage. Human beings are constantly present before the eye and the personified phenomenon also is in a way visible to the eye, though involving considerable mental activity. The next stage is the perception of the Beauty of Content, the inner meaning, even the beauty of Vāyu, who certainly is not as visible or felt as the Maruts are.

Here is Viśvāmitra speaking of the beauty of the Earth: III. 55. 14.

Earth weareth beauties manifold: uplifted, licking her Calf of eighteen months, she standeth.

> Well-skilled I seek the seat of law eternal. Great is the God's supreme and sole dominion. 14.

He is conscious of the fact that the Earth possesses beauties manifold— *pururūpā vapūṁṣi*. In a similar manner the Ṛgvedic poets have perceived the beauty of speech and thought, both of which again are without any concrete form. Thus Devāpi, the son of Ṛṣṭisena tells us that 'speech is brilliant–*dyumati*. X. 98. 2.

We find Bṛhaspati Āṅgiras informing us about speech : X.71.

> Where, like men cleansing corn–flour in a cribble, the wise in spirit have created language,
>
> Friends see and recognise the marks of friendship : their speech retains the blessed sign imprinted. 2.
>
> One man hath never seen Vāk, and yet he seeth : one man hath hearing but hath never heard her.
>
> But to another hath she shown her beauty as a fond well-dressed woman to her husband. 4.

This is indeed very significant, for the poet here sees almost in a sensuous manner the beauty of language and also perceives the 'auspicious beauty' *bhadrā-lakṣmī*-that is residing there. It is obvious that Bhavabhūti takes his cue from these songs, when he describes speech as the ' mother of auspiciousness-*mātā maṅgalanām*. Gaya Plāta describes his beautiful and holy thoughts as

> The will and thoughts within my breast exert their power: they yearn with love, and fly to all the regions round.
>
> None other Comforter is found save only these: my longings and my hopes are fixed upon the Gods : X 64. 2.

Nodha asks Indra in I. 61. 16 to bestow on him 'thought decked with all beauty—*viśvapeśasam dhiyam*—as well as other desired things. He is asking this gift for the Gotamas as well. Dīrghatamas speaks of a 'hymn of glorious brilliancy-*śucipeśasam dhiyam*' in I. 144. 1.

These illustrations will clearly show that the Ṛgvedic poets had seen this Beauty of a subtler type, the Beauty of

Content, of inner meaning, of significance. It is needless to add that perception of this kind of Beauty requires a contemplative mind and cannot be perceived by the mere physical eye that is struck by what is bright and garish. Here is a rich field and possibility for mysticism.

It is from these perceptions of the Beauty of Significance that the Ṛgvedic poets passed into the third stage, that of perception of Beauty itself, trying to personify it, trying to allegorise it and also creating symbols for its representation. From this point of view the concepts of Yakṣa, Gandharva and Apsaras are very important and the creation of these figures is to my mind, a clear testimony to the fact that the Ṛgvedic poets had a very clear idea and perception of Beauty.

Yakṣa according to ROTH is 'a supernatural being: spectral apparition'; according to GRASSMANN 'those who break forth quickly the flood of light; glittering meteor'; according to BERGAIGNE 'supernatural apparitions'; according to LUDWIG 'feast, festival'; according to DEUSSEN 'wondrous thing, prodigy'; according to BLOOMFIELD and OLDENBERG 'spirit'. According to GELDNER it has several meanings as 'astonishment, surprise curiosity, wonder, mystery, piece of art, magician; sorcery, witchcraft; enchantment, transformation; trick, imposture, illusion; power of working miracles miraculous cure, healthy magic; object of wonder or curiosity; wonderful creature; festival and prodigy in nature'.

It is a fact noticed about the Ṛgvedic Gods and deities that they have suffered a restriction and contraction of the field and scope of their activities in the later period and consequently suffered a loss in their grandeur; but at the same time it is to be noticed that they have not suffered any change in their extremely personal and primal traits. The later period thus no doubt created its own new gods; lesser gods of the Ṛgveda like Śiva, Viṣṇu rising into eminence and thus experiencing an expansion at the cost of the prominent Ṛgvedic deities who naturally suffered a contraction yet in whose case, I believe, there has been a retention of their primal personal traits: thus Indra, the Lord of the Gods, no longer leads the gods in their wars against the demons and constantly

needs the help of the other gods or of illustrious kings of the earth, yet his addiction to wine and woman is a trait preserved ; Varuṇa is no longer the mighty lord of the universe, the upholder of the moral order and law, but no doubt he continues to preserve his lordship over the waters. In a similar manner the concept of Yakṣa also suffered a loss of grandeur but the later period has preserved the romantic nature and association with wonder and beauty, the Supernatural and the Beautiful. The reason why such traits have been preserved in such cases is that these are the prominent traits from the earliest times, which could not fade even with the passage of time or Time could not obliterate altogether. Even if the Yakṣa is considered along with the Gandharvas and the Apsarases as witches even then its connection with the Supernatural and the Beautiful would be apparent as could be seen from the sense of the two words 'Witch' and 'Bewitching'.

It is true that an authority as GELDNER (Vedische Studien p. 126 ff) points out that Yakṣa is something dreaded or detested as sin but it is to be remembered that the Ṛgvedic poets describe Bṛhaspati as '*Yakṣabhṛt* (I. 190. 4) also Maruts as '*Yakṣadṛśaḥ*' (VII. 56. 16) and lastly that Vasiṣṭha addresses Varuṇa as '*Yakṣin*' (VII. 88. 6) which certainly should settle the issue for Vasiṣṭha would never have any idea even howsoever remotely connected with 'detestation or dread' while speaking about Varuṇa. Even GELDNER concedes that at some places Yakṣa has the sense of something that gives delight to the eyes. One may further be referred to the Atharvaveda XI. 6. 24 which describes the 'Yakṣa' of Paśupati in the following manner :

Tubhyam āraṇyāḥ paśavo mṛgā vane hitā haṁsāḥ suparṇāḥ śakunā vayāṁsi ।

Tava yakṣam Paśupate apsvantaḥ tubhyam kṣaranti divyā āpo vṛdhe ॥

Here obviously '*apsu*' could be taken as standing for the other elements and the universe in general. Or again one

can refer to the Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā 34.2 which describes 'Yakṣa' as being present in man in the following manner:

Yena karmaṇyapaso manīṣiṇo yajñe kṛṇvanti vidatheṣu dhīrāḥ।
Yadapūrvam yakṣamantaḥ prajānām tanme manaḥ śivasaṁkalpam astu॥

It is remarkable that Uvaṭa comments '*apūrvam anaparam। yacca yakṣam pūjyam*' and Mahīdhara also observes

'*Yacca yakṣam yaṣṭum śaktam yajñam।*
Yadvā apūrvam anaparam abāhyam iti ukteḥ apūrvam ātmarūpam iti arthaḥ।'

All this should not leave any doubt as to the fact that Yakṣa to these early people was something connected with Wonder, Beauty and Holy. Had it not been the case the Kena could not have certainly used the word Yakṣa with reference to Brahman. The word 'dread' that is used with reference to Yakṣa is to my mind not at all a happy one inasmuch as it has a reference to something unpleasant. On the other hand we have seen that the word is being used with reference to deities like Varuṇa, Bṛhaspati, Paśupati and Brahman; therefore, I would prefer the word 'awe' in this context. One cannot forget the fact that Sāyaṇa, Uvaṭa and Mahīdhara render it with Pūjya. But the last argument that could be made for this meaning of Yakṣa is that the Sun is called '*Yakṣasya adhyakṣaḥ*'. It would be possible for one to argue that Vasiṣṭha dreaded Varuṇa because of the dropsy which was inflicted on him by the latter or that Bṛhaspati being an Āṅgirasa is dreaded but no such explanation is possible in the case of the Sun God, 'the Ancient Star that wanders on for ever, lofty and strong' and of whose golden beauty the Ṛgvedic poets are so enamoured and of which they constantly sing. In X. 88. 13 the Sun is called as '*Yakṣasya adhyakṣaḥ*' which obviously is deliberate alliteration and pun by '*padānuvṛtti*' and is intended to mean 'Wonder of Wonders' for the Sun is the 'Ancient Star that wanders on forever, lofty and strong'. Similarly the fact that Vasiṣṭha while remembering the favours of Varuṇa in a loving manner

and with a heart full of reverence calls him 'Yakṣin' clearly proves that it carries with it 'a sense of love, awe, sublimity and grandeur as well as divine'. Sāyaṇācārya understands the word as '*pūjya, Yajanīya*' at VII. 88. 6. Thus the idea of holiness is also present here. Further it is to be noted that at VII. 61. 5. 'Yakṣa' is contrasted with 'citra', as in

'*na yāsu citram dadṛśe na yakṣam*'

which GRIFFITH following Sāyaṇācārya renders as 'in whom no wondrous thing is seen, no worship'. That the Ṛgvedic poet did think of combining all these elements together will be again obvious from VIII.13.19 where Nārada Kaṇva addresses Indra as

> When, true to duty, at due times the worshipper offers lauds to thee,
> They call him Purifier, Pure, and Wonderful. (*śuciḥ, pāvakaḥ, adbhutaḥ*)

The idea of Beauty can be seen as present in the description of the Maruts by Vasiṣṭha in VII.56.16:

> The Maruts, fleet as coursers, while they deck them like youths spectators of a festal meeting,
> Linger, like beauteous colts, about the dwelling, like frisking calves, those who pour down the water.

It is clear that '*yakṣadṛśo na śubhayanta maryāḥ*' is a simile and the Maruts are compared to 'handsome and decorated lovers'. The romantic aspect is too obvious to escape notice. From all this discussion it would be clear that Yakṣa combines in itself all the aspects of Holy, Beauty, Sublime and Romantic. I do not feel inclined to accept the rendering of '*Yakṣadṛśaḥ*' as 'youths at a festive gathering' by GELDNER and GRIFFITH. It would be easy, after this context, to understand as to how Yakṣa in later times came to stand for Beauty and Romance.

Another concept of equal importance in this context is that of the Gandharva. Pavitra Aṅgirasa in IX.83.4. identifies Gandharva with the Sun, and assigns him the task of protecting the dwelling place of Soma, the holy. He goes on:

> Gandharva verily protects his dwelling place; Wondrous, he guards the generations of the Gods.

Lord of the snare, he takes the foeman with the snare: those who are most devout have gained a share of meath.

The verbal and literal interpretation of this verse is not difficult but to me it appears that Pavitra Āṅgirasa is here describing the 'sweets' of the mystic experience. The words, Gandharva, Adbuta, Sukṛttama and *Madhuno bhakṣam* should give us the clue. The romantic aspect in the concept of Gandharva can be seen in the fact that he is regarded as the 'husband of the virgins'. A similar notion appears to be present when Gandharva is being identified with the Moon as in IX. 86. 36 and described as the Gandharva of the floods. Gandharva thus would appear to combine in himself Lustre, splendour being a genii closely connected with the Sun; Beauty and Quiet being identified with the Moon; Romantic Nature as being connected with the virgins and through them with Love and Romance and it is in the light of this nature that it becomes clear why in that celebrated song where Yamī and Yama discourse about the ethical character of their union Yama speaks as in X. 10.4.

Shall we do now what we never did aforetime? We who spake righteously now talk impurely?
Gandharva in the floods, the Dame of Waters–such is our bond, such our most lofty kinship.

The path of the Gandharva is essentially connected with Law and Order for in X. 80. 6. Saucīka tells us

Races of human birth pay Agni worship, men who have sprung from Nahuṣa's line adore him.
Stablished in holy oil is Agni's pasture, on the Gandharva path of Law and Order.

Gandharva, the romantic principle of love as well as of ethics is, as observed above, brought into the daily life of man by making, Gandharva the Guardian of Virginity. We are told in X. 85, the hymn celebrating Sūryā's bridal.

Soma obtained her first of all; next the Gandharva was her lord; Agni was thy third husband: now one born of woman is thy fourth 40.

Soma to the Gandharva, and to Agni the Gandharva gave: And Agni hath bestowed on me riches and sons and this my spouse. 41.

One, therefore, need not be surprised when the Ṛgvedic poet asks of the Gandharva Viśvāvasu in X.139.5.

> This song Viśvāvasu shall sing us, meter of air's mid-realm, celestial Gandharva,
> That we may know aright both truth and falsehood: may he inspire our thoughts and help our praises.

The Ṛgvedic poet tries to have a glimpse of this Gandharva and describes him as a Vāyukeśin. Thus Prajāpati Viśvāmitra tells us in III.38.6.

> Three seats ye Sovrans, in the holy synod, many, yea, all, ye honour with your presence.
> There saw I, going thither in the spirit, Gandharvas in their course with wind-blown tresses.

The poet here has a vision of the Gandharva. The Sun is essentially connected with the spirit in man. It is, therefore, that the Upaniṣads speak of the Puruṣa in the Āditya as being identical with the self of man as in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad 1.6.6. and Īśa Upaniṣad 16.

> *'Ya eṣaḥ antarāditye hiraṇmayaḥ puruṣo dṛśyate hiraṇyaśmaśruḥ hiraṇyakeśa āpraṇakhāt sarva eva suvarṇaḥ'। Chān. Up. 1.6.6.*
> *'Yosau asau purusaḥ sohamasmi'। Īśa. Up.16.*

The Āditya, the Sun, and, therefore, the Gandharva, is 'a pre-eminently Golden Deity'. Thus the Gandharva becomes the self of man. This identification of the Gandharva with the human Soul gets confirmation from the Buddhist literature also: for according to the Buddhists, the presence of 'the Gandhabba' is necessary at the time of conception, in which context the Gandhabba appears to be a transmigrating Self. Sāyaṇācārya actually explains Gandharva as the 'Prāṇavāyu' the principal breath.

> *Gāh śabdan dhārayati iti Gandharvaḥ prāṇavāyuḥ'।*
> on *X.177.2.*

The mysticism in this concept of the Sun, the Gandharva, and Self, the Gandharva, is very clearly brought out in X.177,

a short but brilliant piece of composition. Patañga Prajāpati, its author, a Beauty Mystic goes on :

> The sapient with their spirit and their mind behold the Bird adorned with all an Asura's magic might.
>
> Sages observe him in the ocean's inmost depth : the wise disposers seek the station of his rays. 1.
>
> The flying Bird bears Speech within his spirit : erst the Gandharva in the womb pronounced it :
>
> And at the seat of sacrifice the sages cherish this radiant, heavenly-bright invention. 2.
>
> I saw the Herdsman, him who never resteth, approaching and departing on his pathways.
>
> He, clothed in gathered and diffusive splendour, within the worlds continually travels. 3.

GRIFFITH has translated '*ṛtasya pada*' as the 'seat of sacrifice' no doubt not a very happy rendering. Sāyaṇācārya explains Patañga as '*Patati vyāpnoti iti Paramātmā*' and Samudra as '*Samuddravanti asmād bhutāni iti samudraḥ Paramātmā*'. The subject matter of the song is, we are told, '*māyābheda*' piercing through the veil of Māyā. Sāyaṇācārya is not blind to the other expressed meaning for he does explain Patañga as '*Patati gacchati iti Sūryaḥ*' and Samudra as the 'Sūryamaṇḍala' and so on. The beauty of the song is that in a simple yet mystic language it describes an unique experience, the direct vision of Gopa, the Protector of the Universe and of the body as well. It is indeed very significant that this vision of Patañga Prajāpati is identical with that of Dīrghatamas as given in I. 164. 31. which only proves that whatever may be the way by which the mystics travel, their ultimate experience is much the same. The Mystics agree. Thus the Patañga Gandharva pair is the celebrated pair of the Highest Reality and the Self. This relation is what the mystics–*kavayaḥ*, *vipaścitaḥ*–want to know and also perceive.

Apsaras in the Ṛgveda is the third important concept in the context of Beauty Mysticism. It has already been shown as to how both 'Yakṣa' and 'Gandharva', symbols and principles

of Beauty, are ultimately connected with Reality, Law, Order and the Self. Like the Yakṣa, the Gandharva too, in latter literature is a being given to music and pleasure of love. Later age remembered it as a principle of Beauty only. The story of the Apsaras is more or less the same. The word 'Apsaras' would appear to be related to the word 'Psaras' and conveying its opposite. PISCHEL has interpreted the word 'Psaras' as 'Form' and 'Apsaras' would, therefore naturally mean 'Formless'. Mr. P. S. SASTRI observes that 'to imagine that (the Apsaras) they are 'formless' as does PISCHEL, is to run contrary to Aesthetic experience'. I am inclined to accept PISCHEL's way of understanding the word. The Ṛgvedic mind did perceive the beauty of the formless as in the case of the God Vāyu. Moreover, as is the usual case, the perception of the 'Formless', 'Infinite', 'Abstract' is the highest faculty of the human mind and the creation of the Apsaras only shows that the Ṛgvedic poets had a clear vision of Beauty. In case one thinks of accepting the interpretations of 'Psaras' as given by HILLEBRANDT, LUDWIG and BENFEY 'food' or 'meat' or of ROTH 'favourite dish, enjoyment, feast, or of GRASSMANN 'meal, repast, feast, treat', or of Sāyaṇācārya 'panīya, anna, bhakṣaṇa'; even then Apsaras would mean one who has nothing to do with 'food' the normal food and thus a creature which subsists not in the way of men, the mortals, by eating ordinary food. Such an interpretation would go to explain Urvasī's speech in X. 95. 11 and 16.

> Thy birth hath made me drink from earthly milch-kine: 11
> When amid men in altered shape I sojourned, and through four autumns spent the nights among them,
> I tasted once a day a drop of butter; and even now with that I am contented. 16.

Urvasī belongs to that class which does not subsist on the food of the mortals and it was her coming to the world of men that made eating the normal human food necessary. This change is a symbolic one. The condition of her existence is altogether different from that of the mortals and the apparition of Beauty does not feed on the stuff that mortals feed upon. A very pleasing and beautiful picture emerges of the

Apsaras out of the various references in X. 95. 10 and X. 123. Thus we are told that

> These like red kine have hastened forth, the bright ones, and like milch-cows have lowed in emulation. 6.
>
> Like swans they show the beauty of their bodies, like horses in their play they bite and nibble. 9.
>
> She, who flashed brilliant as the falling lightning brought me delicious presents from the waters. 10.

At the mere possibility of an enjoyment by a mortal these nymphs slip out of his hands and become creatures beyond his reach. Purūravas tells us:

> When I, a mortal, wooed to mine embraces these heavenly nymphs who laid aside their raiment,
>
> Like a scared snake they fled from me in terror, like chariot horses when the car has touched them. 8.
>
> When, loving these Immortal Ones, the mortal hath converse with the nymphs as they allow him.
>
> Like swans they show the beauty of their bodies, like horses in their play they bite and nibble. 9.

Thus the Apsaras who are Beautiful and Immortal do not allow the mortals to possess them. It is significant that the poet emphasises upon the mortal nature of Purūravas and contrasts it with the Immortal nature of Urvaśī. Besides Purūravas loves Urvaśī as a mortal, wants to possess her as a mortal: the human self wanting to clasp Beauty from a worldly point of view–an effort bound to end in a tragedy. Purūravas thinks of 'family, son, husband and wife' but Beauty cannot be possessed in this manner, though temporary happiness can be had. Hence Urvaśī, Beauty, speaks:

> I will console him when his tears are falling: he shall not weep and cry for care that blesses.
>
> That which is thine, between us, will I send thee. Go home again, thou fool; thou hast not won me. 13.

Purūravas voices forth the cry of all Lovers of Beauty, Mortals:

> I, her best love, call Urvaśī to meet me, her who fills air and measures out the region.

Let the gift brought by piety approach thee. Turn thou to me again:
My heart is troubled. 17.

But he has been already informed by Beauty herself:

With women there can be no lasting friendship: hearts of hyenas are the hearts of women. 15.

And Woman is the visible symbol of Beauty, as Shelley would assert. Thus this exquisite song is but the usual tragic tale of the human self trying to possess Beauty and yet cling ing to its flesh, desire and passion. Union with Beauty cannot be secured in this manner. MAX MÜLEER and GOLDSTÜCKER are right when they understand Purūravas as the Sun and Urvaśī as the Dawn, Uṣas or the 'morning mist'. We have already seen the relation between the Sun, the Gandharva and the Human Self. Beauty may not and will not accept a mortal's love which is too often physical, but the principle by its very nature cannot remain without Love. Beauty and Love must go together. The Immortal will not accept a mortal as its companion yet it will have a companion of its own order. Thus the Apsaras Urvaśī may not accept Purūravas but she will accept a lover who is a Gandharva, the Sun, the 'lovely Sun' Vena. Purūravas also is the Sun and so is Vena but Purūravas is a mortal and worldly while Vena is 'lovely'–kānta. X. 123 is a happy tale of the romance of the Sun and Apsaras. We are told that the Apsaras, the Lady, sweetly smiling, supports her Lover in sublimest heaven.

Mahīdhara and LUDWIG consider Vena to be the Moon; but the latter is of the view that Vena and Gandharva are two distinct personalities and so by Gandharva understands the Sun. As a matter of fact Vena is the Gandharva spoken of here and the description leaves very little doubt as to the fact that Vena is the Sun. Vena himself is beautiful, for we are told, that he is:

Clad in sweet beautiful raiment beautiful to look on, for he, as light, produceth forms that please us. X. 123 7.

It is indeed significant that this Vena has been brought into relation with Ṛta, Amṛta, Hiraṇya, Varuṇa and Gandharva

in the hymn, a fact which establishes beyond doubt that Vena is the Sun. These very details of his, distinguish him from Purūravas and furnish the reason for his being more fortunate in his Love with the Apsaras. It is ethical purity that entitles one to the friendship and love of the Beautiful. In the song X. 136. the Gods, Agni, Vāyu and Sūrya are regarded as Keśins, Munis with loose hair and about them is said :

> Treading the path of sylvan beasts, Gandharvas and Apsaras, he with long locks, who knows the wish, is a sweet most delightful friend. 6.

It is again significant that Purūravas, as the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa XI.5.1.1. tells us, became one of the Gandharvas and gained the company of Urvaśī. Thus it is only a Gandharva who is a fit and worthy companion of an Apsaras. Only a Gandharva can possess an Apsaras. We have already shown that Gandharva in the first instance stands for the Sun and at the same time for the Human Self and that Apsaras stands for Beauty. In the Song of Purūravas we get the eloquent expression to the very poignant yearning of the earthly self for Beauty and in the Song of Vena we get the fulfilment of the dream. It has also been shown that these apparitions of Beauty as a rule, are brought into relation with the Sublime, Love, Law and Order. The aim of pursuit of Beauty is the happy marriage of the Gandharva and the Apsaras in the highest heaven–*parame Vyomni*. Reality is Beauty, Order and Law and the Self has a desire to possess it, or at least to have a vision of the same. The Ṛgvedic Mystics saw clearly that only ethical purity could enable one to go to the higher regions and 'taste the sweets'–madhu. Purūravas and Vena would thus represent the two phases of the Self, the one of desire and passion, when it cries in all directions, in many ways as the term 'Purū' and 'ravas' would imply. The word 'Purū' has the sense of many and diverse while 'ravas' a cry is not an impossibility. Vena on the other hand would mean the Self that shines in its own refulgence and splendour, the earthly element of passions and desires being removed completely.

In this manner in the subtle poetry of the Gandharva and the Apsaras the Ṛgvedic mystics have given to us their visions of Beauty and their verdict too, that a Beauty Mystic is usually a Purūravas and rarely a Vena. The Human Self will always and forever address Beauty as :

> Ho there, my consort ! stay, thou fierce-souled lady, and let us reason for a while together.
>
> Such thoughts as these of ours, while yet unspoken in days gone by have never brought us comfort. X.95.1.

A conclusion of the Beauty Mystics which perfectly agrees with the conclusion of the Philosophical Mystics! X. 82.7.

> Ye will not find him who produced these creatures : another thing hath risen up among you.
>
> Enrapt in mysty cloud, with lips that stammer, hymn-chanters wander and are discontented.

CHAPTER SIX

TYPICAL MYSTICS

Who could be regarded as the typical mystic of the Vedic age? If the foregoing discussion of the Vedic Mysticism has enabled us to grasp the essentials of this ancient Aryan Mysticism and if we have come to the conclusion that this Mysticism is a typical blend of Knowledge, Devotion and Materialism: Realization of the Godhead could be had with these elements: Ascetism was not considered as essential for the vision of the Divine, then to answer the question posed at the outset would be easy. For who else than Vasiṣṭha could be given that honour? Who would better than he deserve it? If an attempt is made to form some idea of the life of this very interesting personality of the Vedic times the view expressed above will be found to have ample evidence of facts from the songs themselves. Thanks to the Saṁhitākāras who arranged the songs authorwise in the Maṇḍalas and thus made the study of an individual collection with a view to collecting material for an elucidation of a personality of the author possible. Such an attempt so far as the Maṇḍala of the Vasiṣṭhas is concerned yields very fruitful results. The personality of the sage Vasiṣṭha is indeed a very colourful one. Sāyaṇācārya narrates very interesting stories and incidents in the life of Vasiṣṭha. Thus while commenting on VII.104.12 we are told about the cruel slaughter of the hundred sons of Vasiṣṭha. The ṛk is:

> The prudent finds it easy to distinguish the true and false:
>
> Their words oppose each other.
>
> Of these two that which is the true and honest. Some protects,
>
> And brings the false to nothing. VII.104.12.

Sāyaṇācārya observes: *Atra kecidāhuḥ—*

Hatvā putraśatam pūrvam vasiṣṭhasya mahātmanaḥ
Vasiṣṭham rākṣasosi tvam Vasiṣṭham rūpamāśritaḥ ॥

Aham Vasiṣṭha ityevam jighāṁsū rākṣasobravīt।
Atrottarā ṛcho dṛṣṭā vasiṣṭhena iti naḥ śrutam ॥

It is very difficult to believe in this Mahābhārata story as being historically true and the real background of the ṛk.

Whatever it may be, the entire Sūkta is very interesting as it shows Vasiṣṭha answering a charge brought against him that he is a sorcerer-yātudhāna.

Thus ṛks 8 and 15 are to the point :

> Who so accuses me with words of falsehood when I pursue my way with guileless spirit,
>
> May he, the speaker of untruth, be, Indra, like water which the hollowed hand compresses. (8)
>
> So may I die this day if I have harassed any man's life or if I be a demon.
>
> Yea, may he lose all his ten sons together who with false tongue hath called me Yātudhāna. (15)

MAX MÜLLER's suggestion is that this charge of heresy, and of murderous and demoniacal character has been brought against the sage by Viśvāmitra. This suggestion gains the nature of plausibility in view of the ṛk 14 which is :

> As if I worshipped deities of falsehood, or thought vain thoughts about the Gods, O Agni.
>
> Why art thou angry with us, Jātavedas ? Destruction fall on those who lie against thee ! (14)

Why was the charge of 'worshipping deities of falsehood' or entertaining thoughts, 'vain thoughts about Gods' brought against Vasiṣṭha who was a devoted worshipper of Indra and Varuṇa and who moreover had a divine birth ? Why is Vasiṣṭha speaking here of the anger of Agni, Jātavedas ? Has it anything to do with 88.2, where he identifies the faces of Varuṇa and Agni.

> And now, as I am come before his presence, I take the face of Varuṇa for Agni's.

So might he bring–Lord also of the darkness–the light in heaven that I may see its beauty!

Vasiṣṭha is here lamenting the fact that he has been forsaken by his favourite deity Varuṇa. Formerly Agni with his brilliance helped him, Vasiṣṭha, to have vision of Varuṇa to experience a transformation, a transportation to the realm of Varuṇa and enjoy communion with him. But now that is no longer possible. Vasiṣṭha did thus suffer from the wrath or disfavour of the gods.

There is another, perhaps more interesting incident alluded to in VII. 55, Sleep Charm, the Prasvāpinī. According to Sāyaṇācārya there are two accounts of the incident which serve as the background of this hymn. Sāyaṇācārya observes that the Bṛhaddevatā informs us :

Varuṇasya gṛhān rātrau Vasiṣṭhaḥ svapna-steyam-ācaran।
praviveśātha tam tatra śvā nadannabhyavartata ॥
Krandantaṁ sārameyaṁ sa dhāvantaṁ daṣṭum udyataṁ।
yadārjaneti ca dvābhyām śāntvayitvā hi āṣusupat।
Evam prasvāpayāmāsa janamanyam ca Vāruṇam ॥

Bṛh. D. 6. 11-13.

The other version is '*atra kecit punarevam āhuḥ*:

Āsām prasvāpinītvam tu kathāsu parikalpyate।
Vasiṣṭhaḥ tṛṣito annārthī trirātrālabdhabhojanaḥ ॥
Caturtharātrau cauryārtham Vāruṇam gṛham etya tu।
Koṣṭhāgāre pravesāya pālakaśvādisuptaye।
Yadārjaneti saptarcam dadarśa ca jajāpa ca ॥

Anu. Bha. 7.55.

The point to be noted is that still Vasiṣṭha is regarding himself as Indra's man, *Indrasya stotā* (3, 4). Another point is that the '*steya*' story deserves to be discredited for Vasiṣṭha is himself asking the dog to bark at the thief, *stena* or *taskara*. It is true that a thief, *stena*, never regards himself to be a thief, but here as said above Vasiṣṭha is proudly referring to himself to be a devotee of Indra, *Indra-stotā*. Another more charitable interpretation is that we here have a love charm. The commentators refer to Varuṇa's dog but the Ṛgveda usually speaks of the dogs of Yama and

rarely those of Varuṇa. It is likely that because of the close and personal relations of Vasiṣṭha and Varuṇa, the commentators have invented this story of Vasiṣṭha's nocturnal entry into Varuṇa's house. Anyway Vasiṣṭha appears to have severely suffered from the want of food or of beloved.

The relations between Vasiṣṭha and Varuṇa are very significant. Time and again Vasiṣṭha speaks of his communion with Varuṇa. Two songs VII. 86 and 88 deserve notice in this respect.

I give below the relevant portions from these songs :

With mine own heart I commune on the question how Varuṇa and I may be united.

What gift of mine will he accept unangered? When may I calmly look and find him gracious? 2.

Fain to know this my sin I question others : I seek the wise, O Varuṇa, and ask them.

This one same answer even the sages gave me, surely this Varuṇa is angry with thee. 3.

What, Varuṇa, hath been my chief transgression, that thou wouldst slay the friend who sings thy praises?

Tell me, Unconquerable Lord, and quickly sinless will I approach thee with mine homage. 4.

Free us from sins committed by our fathers, from those wherein we have ourselves offended.

O King, loose, like a thief who feeds the cattle, as from the cord a calf, set free Vasiṣṭha. 5.

Not our own will betrayed us, but seduction, thoughtlessness, Varuṇa ! Wine, dice, or anger.

The old is near to lead astray the younger : even sleep removeth not all evil-doing. 6.

Estrangement has taken place between the God and the devotee. As the story goes Vasiṣṭha has been suffering from dropsy and this has, in the usual manner been interpreted as the punishment of Varuṇa. The sense of sin or guilt is present in the mind of the poet. Like a true devotee Vasiṣṭha

is speaking with real religious fervour. He has the intense desire to carry out the atonement for his sin. The lyrical tone of the passage and the keen sense of having something valuable lost is too obvious to need any comment. Perhaps one can in some measure understand the cause of this anguish for Vasiṣṭha tells us in 88. 3–6 :

> When Varuṇa and I embark together and urge our boat into the midst of ocean,
>
> We, when we ride over ridges of the waters, will swing within that swing and there be happy. 3.
>
> Varuṇa placed Vasiṣṭha in the vessel, and deftly with his might made him a ṛṣi.
>
> When days shone bright, the Sage made him a Singer, while the heavens broadened and the Dawns were lengthened. 4.
>
> What hath become of those our ancient friendships, when without enmity we walked together?
>
> I, Varuṇa, thou glorious Lord, have entered thy lofty home, thine house with thousand portals. 5.
>
> If he, thy true ally, hath sinned against thee, still, Varuṇa, he is the friend thou lovest.
>
> Let us not, Living One, as sinners, know thee : give shelter, as a sage, to him who lauds thee. 6.

Vasiṣṭha's vision of Varuṇa and communion with him is clearly referred to here. GRIFFITH is inclined to think that this hymn in all probability closed with the ṛk 6. It makes the close natural, more effective and more artistic too. The entire hymn is a mystic cry for the lost vision and communion with the Godhead. Vasiṣṭha's vision of and communion with Varuṇa are again referred to in a remarkable hymn VII 87 where Vasiṣṭha speaks of his having received knowledge from Varuṇa. Vasiṣṭha tells us :

> To me who understand hath Varuṇa spoken, the names borne by the Cow are three times seven.
>
> The sapient God, knowing the places secret, shall speak as it were to teach the race that cometh. 4.

On him three heavens rest and are supported, and the three earths are there in sixfold order.
The wise King Varuṇa hath made in heaven that Golden Swing to cover it with glory. 87.4,5.

If ever a clear evidence of Vasiṣṭha's being a mystic is required what better could be given? He speaks of the communion, conversation and transmission of knowledge. It is worth while analysing the concept of Golden Swing. Sāyaṇācārya explains it under 87. 5, as the Sun which like a swing touches the two quarters. The word '*Hiraṇyam*'–golden–no doubt would support this idea for it is the Sun who is constantly spoken of as Golden. Now in 88.3 Vasiṣṭha speaks of his having been in this Golden Swing with Varuṇa. I have in the foregoing sections tried to point out the significance and importance of the Sun God and the Hiraṇya from the point of view of the Upaniṣadic thought, for these are seen to develop into the concept of the Āditya Puruṣa, an emblem of the Highest Reality. It is but natural if Vasiṣṭha with these voyages and swings with his Deity Varuṇa was somewhat indifferent to the other deities of the Vedic pantheon and such a supposition can explain the charge of heresy brought against him. Vasiṣṭha actually speaks of a curse from which the Gods suffer, for he credits Agni with the distinction of having been the Deliverer of Gods. VII.13.2. '*Tvam agne devān abhiśasteḥ amuñcaḥ*'. 'Thou settest the Gods free from the curse that bound them.' Vasiṣṭha's vision of the unity of Gods and their ultimate identity with the Sun is indeed remarkable. Thus to Agni he says: 'O Agni, thou art Varuṇa and Mitra: Vasiṣṭhas with their holy hymns exhalt thee.' VII.12.3. In this very context one might think of '*Agneranīkam varuṇasya mansi*' 88.2. He praises Agni again in 3.6.

O fair of face, beautiful is thine aspect, when, very near at hand like gold thou gleamest.
Like Heavens thundering roar thy might approaches, and like the wondrous Sun thy light thou showest.

And so on; for similar thoughts one might again refer to other songs to Agni 8. 4, 10.2 etc This would only prove the contemplative nature of Vasiṣṭha. It is true that he approaches

the Vedic Gods with the usual Aryan supplications for grant of heroes, cattle and wealth but the development of his thought is clearly reflected in his songs. I would arrange the songs of Vasiṣṭha in three groups arranged in three layers, giving us almost a chronological development of his mind. I would thus speak of three periods in the development of Vasiṣṭha's mind : the Indra Period, the Agni Period and the Varuṇa Period. In speaking of these periods it is not intended to convey any idea of watertight compartments. In the Indra Period he takes pride in his achievements which he accomplished in collaboration with Indra. We have already seen how he styles himself as a devotee of Indra, *Indra-stotā*. His mind is the typical Aryan mind longing for victory in war, cattle, wealth and heroes. In the Agni Period he has become more contemplative and has begun to perceive the unity and the indentity of the gods. In the Varuṇa Period, the third one, he speaks of his visions and experiences of the Divine. The confident Aryan warlike tone of the Indra songs does certainly bear a sharp contrast to that of the typically submissive and self-expressive Varuṇa songs. It is very difficult to say what effected this transformation in him : may be the terrific disease of dropsy from which he suffered or the fact that Death stared him in the face or the loss of sons, or all these calamities together or any one of these might have been responsible for this change in attitude and outlook. Vasiṣṭha implores Varuṇa in VII. 89.

'Mo ṣu Varuṇa mṛṇmayam gṛham rājan aham gamam।
mṛḷā sukṣatra mṛḷaya।

Sāyaṇācārya reads here a desire on the part of Vasiṣṭha to enter the golden house of Varuṇa, which would in reality mean a desire for salvation. Modern scholarship finds here a reference to the tomb, the house of clay. It is also perfectly possible that in view of this contemplative development of his mind that he was charged of heresy by the contemporaries. Because of his visions he was regarded as a magician.

But his glorious birth is also referred to in a song. VII. 33. He is a '*Maitrā-varuṇi*' and in a sense '*Āurvaśeya*'. Ṛks 11, 12 and 13 are relevant :

Born of their love for Urvaśī, Vasiṣṭha, thou, priest, art son of Varuṇa and Mitra ;

And as a fallen drop, in heavenly fervour, all the Gods laid thee on a lotus blossom.

He, thinker, knower of both earth and heaven, endowed with many a gift, bestowing thousands,

Destined to wear the vesture spun by Yama, sprang from the Apsaras to life, Vasiṣṭha.

Born at the sacrifice, urged by adorations, both with a common flow bedewed the pitcher.

Then from the midst thereof there rose up Māna, and thence they say was born the sage Vasiṣṭha.

It is true that we are taken here into the realm of the mythical, yet the account is not without its significance. That he is a son of Varuṇa explains the very close and personal relation which Vasiṣṭha has with that God. The Mitra element in his blood accounts for the high ethical qualities and his contemplative nature. Lastly, from the mother's side he is the child of an Apsaras and this accounts for his love of beauty. On many occasions Vasiṣṭha craves for light so that he might see the beauty. Thus in 88.2.

And now, as I am come before his presence, I take the face of Varuṇa to Agni's

So might he bring-Lord also of the darkness-the light in heaven that I may see its beauty.

It is through the Sun that he has the vision of the universe and its mystery. Thus we are told in VII. 33.9.

They with perceptions of the heart in secret resort to that which spreads a thousand branches.

The Apsaras brought hither the Vasiṣṭhas wearing the vesture spun for them by Yama.

LUDWIG first understood the reference to be to the Sun but later on thought that this was a reference to the mystic tree sustained by Varuṇa in the baseless region.

Varuṇa, King, of hallowed might, sustaineth erect the Tree's stem in the baseless region.

Its rays, whose root is high above, stream downward Deep may they sink within us and be hidden. I.24.7.

It is clear that this tree has a reference to the Aśvattha Tree of the later philosophical thought. Another fact to be noted is that in 33·10 Vasiṣṭha appears as the embodiment of lightning, light or fire and that these are the material of the mystic's vision of the Highest Reality as given in the Upaniṣads. That Vasiṣṭha was a visionary is narrated in another interesting and important account. Sāyaṇācārya in his comments on 100.6 tells us :

' Purā kila Viṣṇuḥ svam rūpam parityajya kṛtrimam rūpāntaram dhārayan saṁgrāme Vasiṣṭhasya sahāyam cakāra | Tam jānan ṛṣiḥ anayā pratyācaṣṭe | '

Thus it is clear from the songs themselves that Vasiṣṭha was a mystic and had a vision of the Deities. That he was born at a sacrifice speaks for his holy nature. It is but natural that with all this greatness about him he should have evoked the praise as given in 33.8.

Like the Sun's growing glory is their splendour, and like the sea's is their unfathomed greatness.

Their course is like the wind's. Your lauds, Vasiṣṭhas, can never be attained by any other.

Viewed superficially Vasiṣṭha's life would appear as a perfectly normal and ordinary life of an ancient Aryan ṛṣi. But I have thought of this life as a typical Aryan Mystic's life for to me it is a happy combination of all the elements that go to make up a great mystic. He did yield to the superstitions, ambitions and aspirations of his times and also to the peculiar temptations of the mystic's temparament, yet the fact remains that he is a combination of 'the heroic and the submissive, the active and the passive, the austere and the tender, the sober and the passionate, which makes up the rare and winsome temperentia of the best mystics'.

His visions of the Deities have a certain chronology which reveals a progress in the mystical qualities. He had the visions of Indra and Viṣṇu on the battlefield, probably the early active period of his life. By the fire-side the contemplative priest has the vision of Agni and the Sun. Failing health draws him to Varuṇa and this contact developed and yielded a rich reward. He received instruction from the Godhead, had the singular good luck of having communion with him, entering his majestic palace, having a voyage in the God's yatcht and having the pleasures in the Golden Swing. In the meanwhile as he is on his way to realisation he is charged by the contemporaries of heresy but he is quite confident of his ethical superiority over the accusers. Like all other mystics he has the feeling that he has been forsaken by his favourite Deity and this incites him to self-analysis and examination. Here we witness the phenomenon of self-centered Aryan Individualism melting away. His sense of sin and guilt have something very touching about it. We watch the deepening of his humility. His sense of sin is not a 'dry doctrinal conviction' nor an artificial product of "grovelling" conceptions of man's "total depravity" but it is like all true religious poetry 'spontaneous and passionate self-accusation of love in the presence of the Supreme Love, the deep and sudden conviction of poverty and nakedness in face of offered grace'. There is nothing theological or priestly about it. It is in this sense that his life has been a fine blending of knowledge, devotion and materialism. The Ṛgvedic Mysticism was not married to Asceticism and Vasiṣṭha's life is a testimony to this fact. No other sage of the Vedic times had such a versatile mind. He is impressed by the beauties of the Dawn and even the sight of the frogs in the rainy season inspires him to poetry and it is worth noticing here that even here he is impressed by the 'Samānatva and the Virūpatva' (103.6), unity amidst diversity, of the frogs. Did he intend mildly ridiculing theology and priestcraft (105.1,5,7,8), now that he had the vision and communion with the God Varuṇa, the Highest Reality?

Indian Tradition accords the honour of being a Brahmarṣi to Vasiṣṭha but denies the same to Viśvāmitra. Vasiṣṭha's

quiet temperament has always been held as the ideal one and in sharp contrast with the haughty temperament of his rival. With all this background it should not be difficult for one to comprehend the reasons as to why Vasiṣṭha's name appears in the line of the teachers of the Vedānta doctrine and why the story of his having received knowledge from the Highest Deity has been made use of by the later writers. According to Madhva, Vyāsatīrtha and Śīrnivāsa, the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad is a revelation of Varuṇa in the form of a frog. Thus we are told :

Dhyāyan Nārāyaṇam devam praṇavena samāhitaḥ।
Maṇḍūkarūpivaruṇaḥ tuṣṭāva Harim avyayam॥
Iti maṇḍūkarūpi sandadarśa Varuṇaḥ śrutim।

or again

Ḅrahmadṛṣṭān ato mantrān pramāṇam Salileśvaraḥ।

This is how Varuṇa has found a place in the transmitors of philosophical knowledge. No surprise therefore if the celebrated disciple of this Deity also found a place in the promulgators of the Advaita philosophy. The Guruparaṁparā of the Saṁkarapīṭha is given as :—

Om Nārāyaṇam Padmabhavam Vasiṣṭham
Śaktim ca tatputraparāśaram ca।
Vyāsam Śukam Gauḍapadam mahāntam
Govindayogīndramathāsya śiṣyam॥

Thus have they who seek identity with Brahman commemorated the memory of one who first on Indian soil 'merged himself in the Highest Deity and had communion with it'.

There might arise a doubt regarding the validity of the sketch of the life of Vasiṣṭha as offered here. The traditional view is that the songs in the Maṇḍala VII are of Vasiṣṭha and the members of his family while the presumption in the sketch attempted here is that these are the songs of one and the same poet and that therefore in the light of these songs a sketch of the personality could be attempted. As a matter of fact, a glance at the index of the ṛṣis tells us that a very large

part of the Maṇḍala VII is the composition of Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇiḥ. Sāyaṇācārya points out places where a different authorship is traditionally recorded : thus at 32.26 '*Indra kratuṁ naḥ*' is ascribed to Śakti but he also tells us that some ascribe it to Vasiṣṭha himself.

> '*Indra kratuṁ naḥ iti pragāthasya ardharcasya ca Vasiṣṭhaputraḥ Śaktiḥ Vasiṣṭho vā*' । *on* 32.26.

Similarly in the Family Hymn 33. he sees joint authorship as ṛks 1–9 are ascribed to Vasiṣṭha while 10–14 are ascribed to the sons of Vasiṣṭha. Further we find Sāyaṇācārya remarking about hymn 101 that the ṛṣi of the hymn may be Kumāra Agniputra or Vasiṣṭha and that this is to be understood as holding good for the hymn 102 as well. (*Pūrvavat ṛṣidevate* / on 102) and on 101 '*Ete Kumāra āgneyo apaśyat Vasiṣṭha eva vā iti vakṣyamāṇatvāt agniputra kumāro ṛṣiḥ vasiṣṭho vā* ।' For the rest of the portion of the Maṇḍala Vasiṣṭha is given as the ṛṣi. But in addition to this evidence from the tradition—for whatever worth it is—one can prove purely on internal grounds that particularly the songs which have been made use of in the sketch attempted here are of one and the same person. Thus songs 86–88 are no doubt the composition of one and the same person for these refer to the vision of Varuṇa 86.2; 87.4; 88.3. The friendship with Varuṇa which the person did once enjoy and which he no longer enjoys due to an estrangement of some kind is the one theme of these songs. Again 86.4 establishes relation with 89. For 89 is a prayer to Varuṇa so that the person who is suffering from dropsy 89.2. might not die and in it Varuṇa is asked to show compassion as the refrain '*mṛḷā sukṣatra mṛḷaya*' indicates; while 86.4 asks the God Varuṇa as to why he is about to kil his friend. In fact these songs represent what might be called the 'dark night' of the soul of Vasiṣṭha.

In a similar manner hymns 88 and 55, the Prasvāpini, appear to be no doubt connected. If the traditional account regarding the background of hymn 55 is to be taken as true—for in either account, that of the Bṛhaddevatā 6. 11–13 or that of the Anu. Bha. 7.55 the person is about to enter at

night the palace of Varuṇa while 88.5 actually refers to the friendship of the person with Varuṇa as well as to his experience of 'going to the thousand-doored palace of the God Varuṇa. These visions of Varuṇa are again related to the vision of Viṣṇu in 100.6 as well as to the visions of Indra in hymn 18 which gives the incidents of the Dāśarājña War. This very friend of Indra is no doubt the friend of Varuṇa in 55 as can be seen from his own words :

> *'Stotṛn Indrasya rāyasi kim asmān ducchunāyase ni ṣu svapa'* । 55.3.

The occasion is of entry into the palace of Varuṇa but the boast is of being a 'singer of Indra'. Thus all these songs have an internal connection which a critical reader will certainly not miss. The Frog Song, as a matter of fact, an inspired poetical utterance must have been or is likely to have been taken as a satire both against the Brāhmaṇas as well as the Atirātra 108.7–8 and this might have naturally led to the charge of being a Yātudhāna, of heresy in 104.15. The conclusion, therefore, that all these songs Nos. 18, 55, 86–89, 100, 103, 104 refer to the life of one and the same individual eems to me to be inescapable and it also appears as perfectly natural that such a person should have been described in the Family Hymn No. 33 in the manner as has been done. From this it will be clear as to why a claim is being made that the life of the mystic Vasiṣṭha stands reflected in his songs.

Another interesting personality of the Vedic times into whose life we can have a peep is Dīrghatamas, the son of Ucathya and Mamatā (I.158.4; 147.3; 152.6; 158.6). As a mystic he can be regarded as next in importance to Vasiṣṭha whose life we have studied above. Hymns I·140–164 are by him and in themselves form a very homogeneous group throwing a flood of light on the life of this mystic. His life has been a life full of thrilling incidents. He was born blind as a result of a curse of Bṛhaspati as Sāyaṇācārya informs us in his comments on 147.3 a ṛik in which the restoration of his eyesight due to the favours of Agni is referred to. In 158 he tells us that he lived to be a man of ninety years. The actual words are :

Dirghatamā Māmateyo jujurvān daśame yuge on which GRIFFITH observes 'the tenth age : perhaps the tenth decade. The meaning of the verse which appears to be a later addition is obscure'. One may however observe that '*daśama yuga*' or '*daśami*' with reference to age means ninety and in support, a text though a very late one, can be cited as Manusmṛti '*Śūdropi daśamim gataḥ*'. If I. 158.6 tells us that he was a non-agenarian, 4 and 5 of the same hymn tell us about his encounters with Traitana, a Dāsa. We are told :

> Let not the wood ten times up-piled consume me, when fixed for you it bites the ground it stands on.4 cd.
>
> The most maternal streams, wherein the Dāsas cast me securely bound, have not devoured me.
>
> When Traitana would cleave my head asunder, the Dāsa wounded his own breast and shoulders. 5.

Dīrghatamas has survived all these incidents, or ordeals as GRIFFITH understands them, but to us these are important for in a man's life incidents such as these only result in increasing his God-consciousness. Dīrghatamas believes that his miraculous escape is due to the fact that Gods hear and respond to his prayers, a fact which is certainly responsible for the supreme confidence that he has in his prayers and words. This very survival of his through all these calamities made his personality very strong and tough, a fact which is amply reflected in his songs. He constantly refers to the might of his songs : 145.3. 'he i. e. Agni only will give ear to all the words I speak; he praises with Mighty hymns' 141.13–*śimivadbhiḥ arkaiḥ*—he speaks of his songs as 'beautiful on account of pure thought', 144.1–*śucipeśasaṁ dhiyaṁ*. He knows that all his actions and prayers, the Gods have accepted and liked.

> '*Juṣanta viśvānyasya karmopastutiṁ bharamāṇasya kāroḥ*' 1.148.2.

He has inspiration and is capable of fine phrases such as '*navyam navyam tantum ātanvate*' 159.4 ; alliterative lines such as 160.3.

'*Sa vahniḥ purtaḥ pitroḥ pavitravān punāti dhīro bhuvanān māyayā*' / or again 'like swans in a row', *hansā iva śreṇiśaḥ* 163.10. He has a very keen desire for knowledge and naturally possesses an inquisitive nature. Ṛks 4, 5, 16 of his famous 164, *asyavāmiya*, clearly reveal this fact as well as his contemplative nature. Thus '*Pākaḥ pṛcchāmi*' 5 ; *kaḥ vidvāṁsam. upagāt praṣṭum etat*' 4 ; '*Paśyad akṣaṇvān*' 16 ; '*Sannadho manasā carāmi*' 37 and so on throughout the song. Like the other Vedic mystics he too appears to have been strongly struck by the Solar phenomenon, for he is never wearied of singing of the glory of the Sun. Thus in 152.3-5 he sings of the Sun's travel, his never falling downward. The Sun to him is a horse not born of a horse '*anaśvo jāto anabhīśuḥ arvā*' and this is 'a mystery thought-surpassing' *acittam brahma*. This should explain his mystical identification of Viṣṇu with the Sun in 155.5-6, and equally if not more mystical identification of the Aśvamedha Horse and the Sun as in 163.6. In a similar manner he brings the Ṛbhus in connection with the Sun in 161.13.

This poet of pre-eminently contemplative tendencies has two unique facts about him; firstly he is conscious of the Divine in him. He remarks in 164.21.

'*Ino viśvasya bhuvanasya gopāḥ sa mā dhīraḥ pākamatrā viveśa*' which GRIFFITH renders as 'there is the Universe's mighty Keeper, who, wise, hath entered into me the simple'. He speaks of the 'Immortal being the brother of the mortal'- *Amartyo martyena sayoniḥ*, 30, 38, travelling backward and forward. Secondly he has a very keen desire to be in the world of Viṣṇu as he puts it in 154.5-6.

'*Tadasya prjyam abhi pātho aśyām*' and '*tā vām vāstūni gamadhyai*'. It is then not at all surprising if his prayers are to be found for a common and general weal of the Aryans and not in the interest of a particular family, a fact which would indicate the wide vision and the broad sympathies of this godly soul. Thus he concludes hymn 140 as

> Welcome our laud with thine approval, Agni. May earth and heaven and freely-flowing rivers
> Yield us long life and food and corn and cattle, and may the red Dawns choose for us their choicest 140.13.

He rounds off his song 156 as

> Who, Maker, throned in three worlds helps the Aryan man,
> and gives the worshipper his share of Holy Law.

All this reveals a fruitful divine life of the old sage and his song 164 is his crowning glory. This famous song has been the subject of critical study of Vedic scholars. Indeed, the hymn in question is the high water mark of Vedic Mysticism. Dīrghatamas in a splendid and inspired vision sees the essence of his Being, the Self as well as the Reality. He appears to unravel the mystery of Time and Rain as well as the fact of Rebirth and Recreation. The song has already been referred to in an earlier section but here it may be said that Dīrghatamas has no doubt developed both the sides of Mysticism for he speaks of having seen the Self which is an inward process, while at the same time he is seen speaking to us of the Oneness which has been given different names, that is, he has the Unifying Vision as well, which is an external or outward process. This brilliant vision of the Blind Sage has been the real starting point of the later Indian Philosophical and Mystical thought. His contribution too, therefore, like that of Vasiṣṭha has been immense as well as important. If Vasiṣṭha's mysticism comes out of devotion, emotion and submission, that of Dīrghatamas is the outcome of intellectual quest of self-realization. He tries to study what is individuality and also the elements involved in it. Thus he presents to us an important aspect of Vedic Mysticism and as such his songs have an immense value.

Yet another life which could be studied and reconstructed in the light of the songs is that of Kavaṣa Ailūṣa, a colourful personality indeed! He appears as the author of the songs 30–34 of Maṇḍala X. There are differences of opinion amongst scholars as to who he really was. HOPKINS thinks that he was a king while according to ZIMMER he was the Purohita of the joint tribes named Vaikarṇa, the Kuru–Krivi (Pañcāla) peoples. According to GELDNER he was the Purohita of Kuruśravaṇa and Upamaśravas, the son of Kuruśravaṇa ill-treated him; he is trying to deprecate the anger of his

royal master in X. 33. LUDWIG is of the view that he was the priest of the five peoples. It is true that VII. 18. 12 mentions him along with the Druhyu who both were overthrown by Indra but then it is clear that he is not the author of the songs we are discussing. These songs have nothing in them which even remotely indicates a royal lineage, for in 33.4. he calls himself a 'Ṛṣi'; has a song 32 in honour of Indra and in 33.3 calls on Indra, Śatakratu, to be a father unto him and declares that he is a 'singer or Praiser–stotā–of Indra. So enmity with and destruction at the hands of Indra is simply out of question. These songs, X.30–34 from internal evidence have, no doubt, one and the same author; for 32 and 33 refer to the relation between Kavaṣa and Kuruśravaṇa while 33 and 34 refer to the miserable condition of the singer. Songs 30 and 31 are the usual Vedic prayers to *Apām Napāt*, the Sun etc. and the priestly nature and the atmosphere of the songs is too obvious to need any comment or to escape notice of a critical reader. From the information as well as the hints to be had from these songs it would appear that the poet had fallen on evil days and then rose to priesthood, and became a Ṛṣi. The account furnished by the Brāhmaṇa of the Ṛgaveda, the Aitareya II. 16 and the Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa XII. 1.3 is interesting and relevant in this context. Kavaṣa Ailūṣa, according to these Brāhmaṇas, is a Brāhmaṇa born of a female slave, and was condemned on this count by the other Ṛṣis. MACDONELL and KEITH think that 'this Kavaṣa Ailūṣa is possibly identical with the Kavaṣa of the Ṛgveda. The authors of the Vedic Index take the word '*Dāsyāh putra*', rather literally but it is a word of abuse in Sanskrit. I would like to take the word '*Kitava*' more seriously because this word immediately brings to our mind X.34, the famous Gambler's Hymn. He is also called '*abrāhmaṇa*' and this must be understood as implying the absence of the qualities of a Brāhmaṇa. He has somehow got himself initiated in the Sattra but on being found out is left in a desert to die of thirst. Oppressed by thirst he 'sees' a mantra, and the river Sarasvatī flows by his side and saves him. The other Brāhmaṇas seeing this divine succour in response to his mantra admitted him into the Brahmanical fold and in the Sacrifice as well. This

must have been the beginning of his priesthood. It would appear that his early life was way-ward, that he was a gambler and had lost everything and had earned only censure as can be seen from the epithet '*Kitava*'. Thus the Gambler's Hymn would belong to this period of gloom and despondency. The sincerity of the tone in this hymn is simply unmistakable and the experiences referred to have an extremely personal touch about them. Once he won a place in the Brahmanical fold, he rose to eminence and this is the period of his contact with Kurusravaṇa. He refers to worries in song 33 but these appear to be consequent on the death of his patron. These two songs have an internal connection; for the Gambler's Hymn closes with *Kṛṣimit kṛṣava* '34.13 while the 33.6. has beautiful simile '*kṣetraṁ na raṇvaṁ*' which both point out to Kavaṣa's following agriculture. Sufferings like these and losses also of the patron and the like must have resulted in a contemplative temperament and we find Kavaṣa observing:

> A man should think on wealth and strive to win it by adoration on the path of Order,
> Counsel himself with his own mental insight, and grasp still nobler vigour with his spirit. 31·2.

Further in 31.3 he tells us 'we have become acquainted with Immortals—*navedasaḥ amṛtānām abhūma*' and in 7–10 of the same hymn proceeds to raise and answer some metaphysical questions, the production of Heaven, Earth and the Sun. It is interesting to note that he opens with 'What was the tree, what wood' from which heaven and earth were produced. But like a mystic affirms in 8 'Not only here is this: more is beyond us', *Naitāvadenā paro anyadasti*—etc. Then we come to the Solar mysticism; for in the verses that follow the Sun is identified with the Bull, Agni of the Sacrifice. The poet who complained of the miserable condition of a gambler's life observes in 32.3 the ethical beauty of human life. He observes:

> More beautiful than beauty must this seem to me, when the son duly careth for his parents' line.
> The wife attracts the husband; with a shout of joy the man's auspicious marriage is performed aright.

This same poet observed in his early period :

> My wife holds me aloof, her mother hates me : 34.3.
>
> Others caress the wife of him whose riches the die hath coveted, that rapid courser :
>
> Of him speak father, mother, brothers saying, We know him not : bind him and take him with you. 34.4.

Thus has the Gambler become conscious of something 'Beyond' and also of the moral and ethical beauty in life. He has a teacher, Guru, in Indra and it is by instruction that he has improved, for he tells us :

> Indra, who knoweth well, beheld and showed thee.
>
> 'By him instructed am I come, O Agni.
>
> The stranger asks the way of him who knows it : taught by the skilful guide he travels onward.
>
> This is, truth, in the blessing of instruction : he finds the path that leads directly forward. 32.6–7.

It is impossible not to remember here the Gandhārapuruṣa Dṛṣṭānta, the anology of the man from Gandhāra in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.14 and especially the words '*Sa grāmād grāmaṁ pṛcchan paṇḍito medhāvī gandhārāneva upasampadyate evam iha ācāryavān puruṣo veda.*' It will be seen that Kavaṣa's life has an interest altogether different from that of either Dīrghatamas or Vasiṣṭha. Here we have a wayward and almost an outcast, winning a place among the Seers, perhaps showing the way to sinners towards sainthood.

It would be proper to conclude this discussion of individual mystics of the Ṛgvedic times with a reference to the women of the times. There are prayers and songs connected with women, which reveal an interesting feature of the period we are discussing. Songs I.179 Lopāmudrā, VIII.91 Apālā Ātreyī, X.10 Yamī, 28 Vasukrapatnī, 39–40 Kākṣīvatī Ghoṣā, 85 Sūryā, 95 Ūrvaśī, 139 Brahmajāyā, 125 Vāk Āmbhṛṇi, 145 Indrāṇī, 151 Śraddhā Kāmāyanī, 154 Yamī Vaivasvatī and 159 Paulomī Śacī may be put down as the songs from women, or connected with them, in the Ṛgveda before us. The song of Lopāmudrā

is a frank request by her to her husband Agastya for the pleasures of love. Indian tradition is right when it regards Rati, Love as the theme here and BERGAIGNE's view that the hymn has a mystical meaning, Agastya being identifiable with the celestial Soma whom Lopāmudrā, representing fervent Prayer, succeeds after long labour in drawing down from his secret dwelling place, does not appear quite convincing. Nor need we think of agriculture because of the phrases '*khanamānaḥ khanitraiḥ*' in 6. In her song Apālā Ātreyi is seen praying for a cure from a skin disease and her demands are voiced in 5 where she appears to ask for the restoration of her father's head, rich and bumper harvest from his field and her own fertility. Yamī's conversation with Yama, her brother, centres round the pleasures of love. In the prayer of Vasukra's wife, there is nothing very particularly feminine yet it reveals her anxiety for the weal of her father-in-law. The song is an obscure one as it uses the language of a riddle and diversity of views exists regarding the interpretations of 8 and 9; for GRIFFITH sees a reference to the first sacrifice while LUDWIG sees a reference to the beginning of agriculture. In her two songs Ghoṣā, the royal princess, asks for a cure from Leprosy as she is growing old at home, as she tells us, without a bridegroom. She wants the Aśvins to help her to gain 'a car-borne chieftain rich in steeds.' In the song of Sūryā her marriage is celebrated in a glorious manner, while the song of Ūrvaśī has been already discussed and even if it is regarded as a simple song it is nothing but a desertion of a lover by his beloved. The song of Brahmajāyā refers to adultery and the restoration of the wife in the house, an enigmatic hymn no doubt. In the songs of Indrāṇī we have the womanly pride of beauty and jealousy freely expressed. It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that these songs express nothing more than the ordinary and natural longings of the feminine mind.

Yet two songs deserve notice as being exceptions to this general estimate of these songs. In her songs Śraddhā Kāmāyanī speaks of Faith and of the importance and power of Faith. It is very difficult to say whether Kāmāyanī Śraddhā is a historical personality or an allegory. The song of Vāk, the daughter of the sage Āmbhṛṇī is indeed very significant for

here is described the mystical importance of Speech. The perception of the unity of the world is very clearly expressed. WALLIS observes 'It is thus another expression for that idea of the unity of the world, which we have seen crowning the mystical speculations of all the more abstract hymns of the collection.' The seer of this hymn has no doubt realized the supreme importance of Speech and also the complete penetration of the universe by the Speech. Viewed in this manner the daughter of the sage Āmbhṛṇī would appear to be a mystic who had perceived the unity of the universe and the importance of the Speech, Vāk, and in a sense can be regarded as being responsible for the latter Upaniṣadic thought that all things depend and have a beginning in Speech, 'Vāk Ālaṁbanam, Āraṁbhaṇam' as the Chāndogya Up.6.1. puts it.

Considering this contribution of women to the mystical thought, it is no exaggeration to say that most of these prayers from women are Petitional Prayers and it is very rarely that we get a Prayer of Communion from them, a fact which might appear as surprising if we consider the emotional nature of women in general on the one hand and the relation of Mysticism with Emotion on the other.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EPILOGUE

After a study of the Visions of Reality of the Ṛgvedic Mystics, it is worth our while to attempt an evaluation of their contribution, if any, to the later Indian Mysticism. It has been almost a custom with the students of the Vedas to say that their thought is crude and so is its expression. An attempt has been made in the foregoing discussion to show that nothing can be further from truth than such estimates. It is doing an injustice and being unfair to these Vedic poets, who, as a matter of fact, need not fear any comparison with the poets of other races.

A critical reader of the Ṛgveda is bound to be impressed by the sincerity and the sublimity of the Ṛgvedic Imagination. In spite of the frank materialistic outlook the Ṛgvedic poets are extremely God-fearing and God-loving souls. Devotion and Love appear to be the essence of the religion of these poets. We certainly do not meet here 'barbarians worshipping their barbarous Gods'. The story that the Ṛgveda reveals is a perfectly natural one and it is along these lines that human mind develops. It is, therefore, also perfectly natural that we find among these Ṛgvedic poets mystics of all types of whom PLOTINUS speaks. Through their very devotion to their Gods, Sacrifices and Surroundings and through Contemplation they gradually came to perceive the ONE TRUTH, the UNITY and the IDENTITY. Among these mystics, as we have seen, there have been Priests, Poets, Philosophers and Aesthetes. It is just for this reason that the Ṛgveda is, historically speaking, the source of all later Mysticism that thrived on Indian soil.

What is the nature of the Ṛgvedic Religion? Being of a 'primitive sort' it is predominantly social but we do see it developing, advancing before our very eyes, that is, becoming the matter for individual. In fact 'religion is the product, both of the society and of the individual and therefore gets itself

expressed both in the society and in the individual'. The social expression is bound to be somewhat external and is properly a subject matter for history, anthropology and allied sciences. But when we come to the individual expression of religion we come to its most interesting part and to the realm of psychology. J. B. PRATT (p. 13) divides religious belief into three chief types: Primitive credulity, intellectual belief and emotional belief. BARON VON HUGEL applying this triple division to religion as a whole brings in the structure of our 'ideomotor arc' which begins with sense impression, moves through the central process of reflection, and ends in the final discharge of the will in action. From this point of view religion would appear to have three aspects 'the traditional or historical', 'the rational' and 'the volitional or mystical'. The Vedic religion is no exception to this scheme of things. The traditional part is supplied by the Institution of Sacrifice, the rational part is reflected in the doubts and the philosophical songs while the mystical or the volitional part is given to us in the songs in which the Vedic poets speak of their intense experiences. The traditionalism without the fresh air of reason and the warmth of personal experience tends to be void of any meaning 'cold, dead, and untrue'. This is what we find has happened in the days of the Brāhmaṇas. Rationalism is in its very nature the enemy of traditionalism and serves without doubt, a very useful purpose in maintaining the life and vitality of religion, but when carried to excess, tends to become merely speculative and academic in character, losing all touch with human life. JONATHAN EDWARDS observes 'he, that has doctrinal knowledge and speculation only without affection, never is engaged in the business of religion'. We do not find this extreme form in the Vedic religion for we find there only the beginnings of rationalism. If rationalism tries to 'devitalize' religion Mysticism serves as an 'unfailing antidote' and arrests the process. Mysticism has very peculiar relations with Institutionalism and Rationalism. PRATT has to observe (p. 18) 'Mysticism has something in common with each of these and it also differs from each', and so is seen warring with both of these, having alliances with the other than which it combats. Thus both are its allies as well as its enemies.

But of the two, Mysticism 'has most often chosen Institutionalism as its mate,' a fact which according to VON HUGEL is 'not hard to explain'. "For if external, definite facts and acts are found to lead to certain internal, deep, all embracing emotions and experience, the soul can, to a certain extent, live and thrive in and by a constant moving backwards and forwards between the Institution and the Emotion, and can thus constitute an ever-tightening bond and dialogue, increasingly exclusive of all else". This explains the alliance of the Priest and the Mystic against the Thinker. The Vedic religion reveals all these facts in a very illuminating manner for we do find Mysticism allied to Institutionalism so far as the Institution of Sacrifice in the Ṛgvedic as well as in the Brahmanical times is concerned. This will explain the mysticism of these times as well as throw light on the unsympathetic description of the same as 'pseudo Mysticism', 'mystery mongering' by some Western Scholars. What is really happening in the Vedic religion is not something exceptional or something that deserves downright condemnation, but is what happens everywhere for it is by these stages that human mind develops.

In a similar manner is to be understood the concept of God as is to be seen in the Ṛgveda. It is customary to speak of the frank 'give and take' religion and of the blurred images of the gods worshipped. One might refer to the fact that the God-idea is a very complex psychological phenomenon. 'The idea of God generalizes and idealizes all the values one knows;' but it also true that the idea of God is largely the result of the practical demands and attitudes. Professor LEUBA observes, 'The truth of the matter may be put this way: God is not known, He is not understood; He is used—used a good deal and with an admirable disregard of logical consistency, sometimes as meat purveyor, sometimes as moral support, sometimes as friend, sometimes as an object of love'. (Contents of the Religious consciousness. Monist. XI. 571). Again it is almost an axiom that the God-idea has a dual aspect, the imaginative and the conceptual, in the mind of the devotee, aspects which are somewhat inconsistent according to the different demands of action, emotion and thought. It is, therefore, that we need

not be surprised if we come across such a subtle inconsistency in the God-idea of the Ṛgvedic people. This God-idea has its development along rational lines. PRATT observes: 'the whole story of the development of monotheism and the growth of the moral conception of the deity has been largely determined by a kind of implicit logic—a sense of dissatisfaction with the incongruous. Two tendencies in particular are to be seen as prominent in the development of religious thought. Both these tendencies are characterized by the search for congruity, but one is dominated by a partly rational, chiefly aesthetic desire for a monistic conception and finds satisfaction only in an all-inclusive Absolute; the other is guided by a demand that the divine shall be congruous with our moral sense, and therefore finds the Absolute essentially unsatisfying as a God-idea'. (p. 205). All this is word for word applicable to the Vedic Religion and Thought. It would therefore be only a partial and unjust view if we hold that Henotheism reflects worldly wisdom and selfish attitude or hold that the thought is entirely crude. The Ṛgvedic religion is not primitive in the strictest sense of the term. It is Mysticism that gives vital energy to a faith and it is precisely for this Mysticism that the Ṛgveda has immense importance. The Ṛgveda is an epoch in itself and reveals to us all the aspects of religion that PRATT and others have seen in other faiths.

The Ṛgvedic Songs are really prayers and as such reveal all the characteristics of 'a prayer' determined by the psychologists. We shall not here enter into the discussion whether 'from prayer to spell" or 'from spell to prayer' but we shall only observe that the Vedic Literature at any rate supports the theory that the prayers become the spells. The spontaneous prayers of the Ṛgvedic seers have been turned in the later times into spells by which the gods could be coerced. Prayers are of various types such as 'Ritualistic Prayer, Prayer on account of Faith, Prayer on account of needs or what may be called as Petitional Prayer for spiritual as well as material blessings and lastly the Prayer of Communion. The Ṛgvedic Songs can easily be classified into all these divisions.

Thus many songs which contain invitations to the Deities to come to accept the Sacrifice or the Soma offered, are really

Ritualistic prayers. The Ritualistic prayers tend to become spells soon for they are often repeated, they have always to be uttered in a particular atmosphere and thus tend to become 'fixed' in character both verbally and in spirit. Out of the numerous Vedic Repetitions compiled by BLOOMFIELD a very large number would be seen as coming from these Ritualistic prayers. Though the Ṛgveda itself reveals a sort of fixation of these prayers yet there is some freshness about them. The seers are conscious of their imitation of the earlier songs yet not that every time imitation has spoilt the freshness and vigour as well as the innate sincerity. A similar repetition is to be found in the Petitional prayer which is more intimately connected with the social life and the needs of the individual who is a member of the community. It is thus we find that almost in every prayer of this type the Vedic poet asks for 'sons, cows and horses' and 'safety from the hands of the thieves and wolves'. The refrains like '*Yūyam pāta svastibhiḥ sadā naḥ, Bṛhad vadema vidathe suvīrāḥ*' are only facts illustrative of this phenomenon o 'fixation' of a prayer. As society is a 'moving progressive phenomenon' the contents of a Petitional Prayer also naturally chage. But the most important as well as interesting is the Prayer of Communion in which the presence of a higher Power is felt. This type of prayer often takes the form of a conversation or even of something like a monologue. It often takes the form of a confession of sins and an expression of an urgent longing for a peace that cannot be secured in any other way. Prayer becomes an outlet for pouring out whatever is most pressing in one's mind. PRATT observes that with impulsive temperaments this need of confession is almost universal while with temperaments of the more philosophic type, this type of prayer assumes a more cosmic aspect. Then a vision of 'the whole of things in their cosmic setting' is secured and it becomes a sort of freedom from the worries of life. With the more mystical temperaments it becomes 'a conscious union with the all'. It is in this light that Vāmadeva's '*Aham manurabhavam*' or Nābhānediṣṭha's '*Aham asmi sarvaḥ*' etc. are to be understood. Similarly it is in the light of these remarks that the prayers of Vasiṣṭha VII.82.87 are to be explained. These are his conversations with Varuṇa and have a tone of

confession as well. The reference to '*āgas*' is also significant and with a frank heart he confesses human weaknesses as wine, sleep, dream etc. In Religion there is nothing so important as this kind of Prayer of Communion which results in Mysticism on the one hand and in meditation and self-analysis on the other. It expresses the 'aspirations for higher life and unity with the great all.' If we remember this description of this type of Prayer, it will be seen that the Ṛgveda is full of Mysticism. But mysticism is not of one type only. A very broad division may be suggested as PRATT has done. (p. 339): the mild and the extreme. The first type on account of its very mildness is likely to be neglected or overlooked, while the extreme type has been responsible for the utterances like 'the heart of religion is rotten'. In both these types there is a sense of a Beyond but the mild type of mysticism often takes the form of mere 'affirmations of belief' in intercourse with God or some 'theological or philosophical position'. Further mysticism has in it two elements, the cognitive and the emotional. The latter thrives by the concept of a personal god while the earlier results in the intellectual type of mysticism. It is therefore that the songs of the Ṛgveda represent the emotional type of mysticism as the Gods here are personal, while as we come towards the Upaniṣads, the abstract Absolute begins to appear and we get the cognitive type of mysticism. But the Ṛgveda also shows the beginning of this cognitive type, especially in those songs where the idea of '*ekam sat*' is put forth. All this discussion above must not lead us to believe that the 'mild mystics' have not the joy and delight of the 'extreme mystics'. Even these sing of their delight and this is the reason why a reading of the Ṛgveda leaves one fresh and full of vigour. May be that these are songs of expectations but then there is also the joy and delight of Life and of Reality.

The extreme types do not much differ from the mild in their mysticism save in the degree of their mysticism. Because of their extreme mysticism they are open to being described as 'disintegrated personalities' but so far as the Ṛgveda is concerned we do not come across such type of mysticism. This type of mysticism is associated with asceticism, mortification of the

body and the like. The Ṛgvedic era knows not either asceticism or motifications. The Muni appears as an object of praise no doubt, but that is late in Book X. and that too, in a solitary song. We have observed above that mysticism has two elements, the cognitive and the emotional, and these are very significant for the first is naturally concerned with Truth while the second is concerned with Beauty and Holy : thus mysticism is concerned with Truth, Beauty and Holy. We have seen how every time the Ṛgvedic mystics have given in a very clear manner the indications of their consciousness of the fundamental and intimate relation of these three aspects of the Highest Reality. The mystics pass through three stages, the purgative, the meditative and the unitive. The Vedic mysticism reveals these stages in a somewhat blurred manner.

The mystics constantly speak of their ecstacy and visions. We have seen how the Ṛgvedic poets also sing joyfully, but for the full-throated song of ecstacy we will have to turn to Vasiṣṭha, especially when he sings of his friendship with Varuṇa. This is as it should be. But it is doubtful whether Vasiṣṭha's experience could be called a 'Trance'. One would like to say that in the Ṛgveda, the abberrations of mysticism have not as yet begun to appear.

Mysticism proceeds along two lines, at least Indian Mysticism did : The mystics always carried out the search for Reality by Introspection and also tried to have the Unifying Vision ; the introverts and the extroverts to put it briefly. By these processes they came to realize the existence of the Self and of the Ekam Sat. The first perceives the Self of Man by inward researches, the other perceives Unity outside by seeing the ground-stuff of all external phenomena. The first leads us to the concept of Atman and the other leads us to the concept of Brahman. The first leads us to the perception of the divine element and the ethical excellence of the Inward Reality, the other leads us to the perception of Law, Order Harmony and Delight outside. It is when these two streams that are really widely divergent mingle and interpenetrate that the conception of the Identity arises. The eternal quest of the Indian Philosophers and the Mystics has been Amṛta

and Madhu. It would not be true to say that all these concepts appear for the first time in the Upaniṣads, as is commonly believed, for these concepts already appear in the Ṛgveda. The dialogues of Yājñavalkya and Maitreyī and of Aruṇi and Śvetaketu presuppose much that is really speaking given to us in the Ṛgveda. How repeatedly the Ṛgvedic poets speak Madhu and Amṛta, express a longing for Jyotis and these are concepts which the Upaniṣads develop into Vidyās or doctrines. Suparṇa, Hiraṇya, Gopa are some of the concepts which the Upaniṣads have taken over from the Ṛgveda.

As observed above, the realization of the Identity is the result of the mingling and the interpenetration of the two streams and this too has already taken place in the Ṛgvedic times. Attention has already been drawn to the exquisite little song of Pataṅga, the son of Prajāpati X.177. A reader of the Upaniṣads is struck with the importance of the Āditya and the Āditya Puruṣa in their thought : Chāndogya.III.1–11; 10.1–3; Maitri.VI.1. and so on. The Golden Deity has a very important place in their philosophy. The Muṇḍaka goes to the length of saying

'hiraṇmaye pare kośe virajam brahma niṣkalam
tat śubhram jyotiṣām jyotiḥ tat yad ātmavido viduḥ ||

Muṇḍaka. 11.2.9.

Time and again they speak of the Hiraṇmaya Puruṣa, Rukmavarṇa Kartṛ, and this element also has been supplied by the Ṛgveda. Indian Mysticism in a way may be said to be 'Sun Mysticism'. The Sun is a typical symbol that the Ṛgvedic Imagination has created. In the Sun the Ṛgvedic poets see Beauty, Hiraṇya and Gandharva : in him they see Ṛta; in him they see the prototype of the 'travelling Soul'; he is the Bird and so is the human self. This 'pre-eminently golden Deity' is the centre of the Vision, the Source of Inspiration, the Guide in ethical conduct and the Protector of life in general. It is therefore perfectly logical that the famous 'Gāyatrī' should be a 'Sāvitrī' and that a person who has not received his Sāvitrī should be an un-Aryan, a Vrātya, as we are told '*Sāvitrīpatitāḥ Vrātyāḥ*'.

Another important characteristic of the Ṛgvedic Mysticism is that the Ṛgvedic poets are not haunted by the idea of 'sin or offence'. It is true that they speak of their sins, but it may be safely asserted that these Ṛgvedic Mystics are full of joy and assurance when they have the Vision of the Ultimate. It is this factor which has been primarily responsible for the 'Ānanda Philosophy' of the later times. From all this discussion it would appear that the Ṛgveda supplies the basic structure of later Indian Mysticism.

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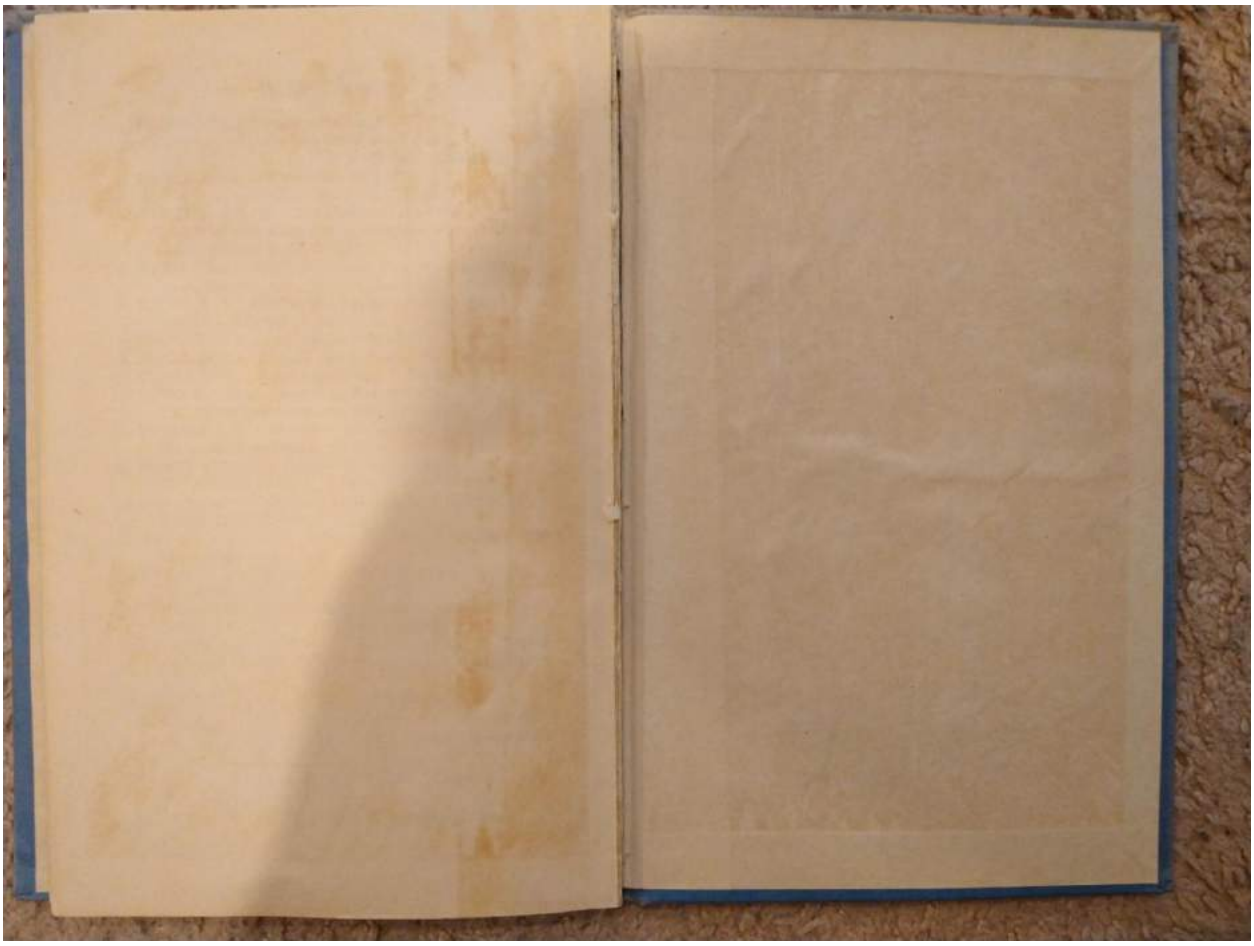
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